

LITTLE BOOKS ON ART

GENERAL EDITOR: CYRIL DAVENPORT

VANDYCK



Ant^o van Dyck

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VANDYCK

BY

M. G. SMALLWOOD

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VANDYCK

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS OF VANDYCK

His birth and parentage—Becomes apprentice to Van Balen—Paints a notable picture at fourteen years of age—Pupil of Rubens at sixteen—Repaints Rubens's damaged picture—Visits England in 1621—Leave of absence from James I.—Almost rivals Rubens at twenty-one—An English art "Evangelist"—Rubens urges Vandyck to go to Italy—The four periods of his career.

IT is difficult for English people to realise that the great portrait-painter, who for so many years made England his home, who bore an English title and was Court Painter to the ill-fated Charles I., did not owe his birth as well as a great part of his fame and success to his adopted country. Nowhere in Europe can the art of Vandyck be so exhaustively studied as in the country where certainly two-thirds of the canvases authentically attributed to him

were produced. Few of the great houses of England are without some example from the brush of the great Flemish painter, and the royal collections at Windsor and the various royal palaces form in themselves a comprehensive study of his work.

Antonius Vandyck, better known as Sir Anthony Vandyck, was born at Antwerp on the 22nd March, 1599, the seventh child of a family of twelve. His father, Frans Van Dyck, was a silk merchant; and his mother, whose maiden name was Maria Cuypers, was famous locally for her artistic embroideries and flower-painting, and from her the young Antonius seems to have received his first lessons. So much aptitude did the child show, that at the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to Hendrik Van Balen, a friend of Rubens and the master of Snyders, and who had a well-established reputation in Antwerp as a painter of merit. A follower of the Van Eycks and Memling, Van Balen belonged rather to the early Flemish school than to the more modern one formed under Italian influences by Rubens, Jordaens, and Crayer, and many of his young pupil's canvases show evidence of the influence of his first master. This same Van Balen was famous for the correctness of his drawing, and

the delicacy of his colouring ; and though his compositions lack the stronger qualities, they have few defects. He painted children with singular grace and delicacy of tone, and it is perhaps to his influence that Vandyck owed the grace and facility with which he depicted child life. In short, the great painter's first master was, as Guiffrey, the famous French critic, remarks, a meritorious artist and a distinguished connoisseur.

Vandyck seems to have given proof of an extraordinary talent even before leaving the studio of Van Balen, for he is known to have painted a picture of an old man in 1613, when he was only fourteen years of age, a picture which eventually found its way and was considered worthy of a place in a small but valuable collection, belonging to a distinguished Parisian connoisseur, M. Joseph-Antoine Borguis, a collection which came under the hammer in 1804. This picture, the earliest known effort of a man afterwards to become world-famous, was alluded to in the sale catalogue in glowing terms, and its technical excellence and colour were especially insisted upon. The canvas was a small one (22 × 18 inches), and bore an inscription, slightly effaced but still legible: Anno 1613

A.v.D.f. AETa. suae. 14. A few marks of alteration and correction were visible, but there were also noticeable those superior qualities which marked the precocious talent of the child painter, who certainly seems to have not been lacking in the confidence and ambition which were to prove so valuable to him in after years.

At sixteen years of age, Vandyck was at his own earnest request admitted into the school of Rubens, with whom he remained as a pupil until 1620, when he was engaged as the assistant of his master. Vandyck must have considered himself very lucky to have thus obtained admission to the school of Rubens, and, indirectly, his admission was a great compliment to his youthful talent, for the reputation of the great Flemish master was such that he was refusing pupils on all sides, and in a letter to Jacques de Bie, the engraver, and dated 11th May, 1611, Rubens himself says, "I may tell you, in very truth and without the least exaggeration, that I have already refused more than a hundred pupils, some of them my own relations and some my wife's, and that I have offended a large number of my best friends."

During this period of pupilage occurred the

famous episode in which the young Anthony is popularly supposed to have played so important a part. In addition to the large semi-public studio in which his pupils and assistants worked, Rubens had a private inner studio, where no one but himself was permitted to enter. One day, when the master had gone out on horseback to seek change and distraction after the day's work, the students bribed a servant to unlock the door of the inner sanctum, where a picture freshly painted stood on the easel. The eager crowd pressed round the canvas, and one of them, a youth named Diepenbeck, pushed by the others, effaced part of the painting—the chin and arm of the Virgin. The youths stared in consternation at the injury they had inadvertently done, and after some deliberation decided that it must be repainted. Vandyck as the most skilful was selected for this delicate piece of work, and so well did he acquit himself that it is said that even Rubens did not at first perceive the trick which had been played upon him. When he found out that a strange brush had been at work upon the canvas and learnt the truth, he treated the matter in his usual kind-hearted way, and the mischievous lads seem to have got off with only the mildest of reproofs.

Rubens early adopted the custom of entrusting the rough draft of his pictures to his disciples, and when the composition had been roughly outlined and the canvas covered, the master corrected and completed the picture; and for some years Vandyck seems to have been occupied in doing this work, which, better than anything else, enabled him to appreciate the resources of the master's marvellous execution. He learnt to sketch in backgrounds, to cover shadows with a thin layer of colour, to preserve their depth and transparency, while the light portions modelled in full colour were made to stand out in vigorous *impasto*.

In 1618 Vandyck was admitted into the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp, a public acknowledgment of his status in the artistic profession, and in 1621 he paid his first visit to England, when he did some work for James I., for which he received the sum of one hundred pounds. His visit must have been a very short one, for the following year he was back in Antwerp. Of this visit there is a record in the shape of an interesting document, of which the original is preserved in His Majesty's State Paper Office. It runs as follows :—

Jovis XXVI. of February 1620-21.
By Order dated XVI. of Feby 1620.

Anthony Vandike in reward
for Service.

To Anthony Vandike the sōme of one hundred pounds by way of reward for speciall service by him performed for his Mat^{ie} without accompt imprest or other charge to be sett uppon him for the some or for anie part thereof.

This visit to England, which seems to have been made at the instance of Thomas, Earl of Arundel, probably lasted only a few months, and in the same month in which the account of his payment occurs is a copy of an official permit for the artist to visit his native country.

28 Feb. 1620-1.

Lord Steward
Lord Chamberlien
Lord Arundell
& Bp. Winton
Mr. Secr. Calvert
Mr. of the Wards.

A passe for Anthonie von Dyck gent his Mat^{ies} Servaunt to travaile for 8 months he havinge obtayned his Mat^{ies} leave in that behalf As was signified by the E. of Arundell.

The permit besides being a passport was actually leave of absence for eight months, but as a matter of fact Vandyck never returned to England until after the death of James I. Whether his disinclination to do so arose from the fact that he considered himself insufficiently appreciated at the Court of James I., or whether he wished to be left free to go to Italy, then as now the Mecca of the artists, it

is difficult to say; probably both reasons influenced him at this juncture, and Rubens himself urged his favourite pupil to finish his artistic education in Italy, where he himself had learned so much from the canvases of Titian, Giorgione, Paul Veronese, and the other great masters of the Venetian school.

Even before Vandyck left Antwerp for Italy the fame of the young artist had already spread beyond his native land, a fact of course responsible for his first visit to England; and a letter still in existence at Norfolk House to Thomas, Earl of Arundel, a zealous patron of art, and dated July 17th, 1620, contains the following interesting extract:—

“Vandyck lives with Rubens; and his works are beginning to be scarcely less esteemed than those of his master. He is a young man of one-and-twenty; his parents are persons of considerable property in this city; and it will be difficult therefore to induce him to remove; especially as he must perceive the rapid fortune which Rubens is amassing.”

The original letter, which was written in Italian, runs:—

“Van Deick sta tuttavia con il Sigr Rubens e viene le sue opere stimate pocho meno di



THE EARL OF ARUNDEL AND HIS SON

quella del suo maestro. E giovane di ventr'un anni, con padre et madre in questa città molto ricchi; di maniera che è difficile, che lui si parta di queste parti; tanto più che vede la fortuna nella quale è Rubens."

The Earl of Arundel, to whom the above letter was written, was known throughout Europe as a most liberal and cultivated patron of the fine arts, and Rubens himself, to use his own words, regarded him as "an Evangelist to the World of Art," and considered himself honoured by a commission to execute the portraits of Lord Arundel and his wife, in spite of the pressure of work which had at the time compelled him to "refuse to execute the portraits of many princes and noblemen."

Nothing is known of Vandyck's first visit to England, and were it not for the State records there would have been no evidence of his having been in this country at all at that period of his life. Of the whole of the early part of his career, indeed, there are but the most meagre details, and it is only from the time that he went to Italy upon the advice of Rubens, that there is any definite and authentic information about either his life or his work. His artistic career divides itself naturally into four periods.

(1) The period of his early work in Antwerp, under the guidance and patronage of Rubens, extending from 1618-21.

(2) His stay in Italy, chiefly at Genoa, from the autumn of 1621 to the end of 1625.

(3) His second residence in Belgium from 1625-32.

(4) His stay in England from the spring of 1632 to December 1641, the date of his death.

CHAPTER II

HIS VISIT TO ITALY

His first important work—A tendency to overcrowd the canvas—Vandyck and Rubens decorate the new church of the Jesuits at Antwerp—The romantic story of Saventhem—Paints his famous “St. Martin”—Independent of Rubens—His picture still guarded by night—Peasants defend it with cross-bows, scythes, and forks—The picture taken to the Louvre and brought back to Saventhem—Vandyck leaves love for glory—Affection of Rubens for him—His presents of paintings to Rubens—His “Seizure of Christ”—The anti-Italian controversy—Studies in Italy—An eternal twilight—Italian influences shown in various works—Meets Sir Kenelm Digby—Vandyck styled “il pittore cavalleresco”—He paints Cardinal Bentivoglio—Continuously annoyed by the painting fraternity—Tour in Sicily—His sketch-book still extant.

OF the first period of Vandyck's artistic career little is known. The young artist had still his way to make in the world of art, in which at that moment his master Rubens was the great constellation which almost eclipsed minor talent. His first work of any importance was a religious picture, a very

natural circumstance since the Church was at that time the great patron of art, and the decoration of their places of worship the chief medium of their patronage.

Vandyck's first picture was painted for the Order of the Dominicans at Antwerp, and is still to be seen in the old Flemish town adorning the same church for which it was painted. It depicts Christ carrying the Cross, and though bearing evidence of being the work of a novice, especially as regards the grouping of the figures, there is yet abundant proof that Rubens' great pupil was no mean draughtsman, and had studied to some purpose the anatomy of the human form. There is certainly no shirking of difficulties in this canvas, and, indeed, there seems to be a tendency to overcrowd the picture with figures to the destruction of a harmonious unity, the natural result, perhaps, of an inexperienced imitator of Rubens.

The next important work which Vandyck undertook was in conjunction with his master, who had signed a contract in 1620 with the Jesuits of Antwerp to decorate their new church, and among the stipulations was one which provided that after Rubens had made the sketches for the thirty-nine pictures he

should be aided in their execution by his pupil whose fame was already growing. The Jesuits appear to have been very pleased with the way in which their order was executed, for they commissioned Vandyck to paint an altar-piece for the same church, a work which he hastened to finish in order to start for Italy; but he seems to have been persuaded just at this juncture by the Earl of Arundel to make his short visit to England.

It was after his brief stay on these shores and before his tour in Italy that the romantic Saventhem episode is supposed to have occurred, the story of which, however, is given with all reservations. The story runs that Vandyck, mounted upon the horse which Rubens had given him for the journey, had already taken the road to Brussels on his way to Italy when the charms of a young and beautiful girl attached to the Court of the Archduchess Isabelle detained him at a little rural retreat called Saventhem, half-way between Antwerp and Brussels. The lady's name was Anna van Ophem, and she is generally known in this connection as Anna of Saventhem. The means adopted by the distinguished painter to make the fair lady's acquaintance are not recorded, but at any rate,

when he called at the rustic cottage where the beautiful Anna was in charge of the canine pets of the Archduchess, his reception seems to have been sufficiently cordial to justify his remaining for some months in this ideal retreat. It is reported by the same gossipy historian that it was at his mistress's request that he painted the "Holy Family" for the church at Saventhem, in which canvas the Holy Mother bore the features of his fair *châtelaine*.

The authorities of the church, who seemed to have treated the whole episode with a Jesuitical philosophy, were charmed with the work, and ordered a second picture from the artist, who for the pendant canvas painted his famous "St. Martin." This picture, in which Vandyck seems to have returned to his first manner, in no way shows the influence of Rubens, but rather that of the first master, Van Balen. The boldness of treatment, purity of colour, and the fine pose and draughtsmanship, prove that Vandyck had in himself all the elements of greatness, and perhaps never needed for their development either the instruction of Rubens or the example of the ancient Italian masters. St. Martin is represented as a young and handsome cavalier mounted on a

white horse, and is supposed to be a portrait of the artist himself as he appeared at this period of his life. "The Holy Family" has disappeared, but the "St. Martin" still hangs in the little parish church of Saventhem, which is always guarded by night in case of any repetition of the attempts which have on several occasions nearly deprived the village of its cherished possession.

The famous picture has had many vicissitudes. About 1750 the curé of the parish and his subordinates decided to sell the picture for the sum of four thousand florins, the transaction having taken place clandestinely between the church authorities and the would-be acquirer of the masterpiece, and neither the lord of the manor, nor the equivalent to the local municipal council, had been consulted in the matter. The indignant peasants, however, saved their picture. Arming themselves with cross-bows, scythes, forks, and other agricultural implements, and reinforced even by the women and children, they surrounded the church, where the picture was already taken down and packed ready for delivery to the waiting purchaser who, seeing the belligerent attitude of the villagers, made good his escape with the help of the curé, and for the time the

picture was saved. But in 1806 a further adventure awaited it. The victorious French army was marching through the country, and a squadron of men passed through Saventhem. The famous picture aroused their envy, and they made preparations to carry it off, though the indignation of the inhabitants made it necessary for them to send for reinforcements from Brussels before carrying out their design. For several years, until the peace of 1815, in fact, the far-famed "St. Martin" hung in the Louvre, after which it was returned to the Belgian village, where it has remained ever since. There have been several attempts to buy the work by bribing the guardians of the picture to part with it, but hitherto without success, so that for close upon three hundred years, with the exception of the brief interval of its forcible removal to Paris, Vandyck's masterpiece has remained in a little village between Antwerp and Brussels, and its presence has lifted an obscure hamlet from insignificance to historical interest.

The news of Vandyck's detention at Saventhem soon reached Antwerp, and Rubens, anxious for the future of his adopted son in art, sent an emissary, Godefroi de Bouillon (who seems to have accompanied Vandyck part

of the way, at any rate, into Italy), who, by arousing his ambition and curiosity, eventually managed to tear the young man away from his enchantress, and Vandyck, like so many before him, as Michiels says, "*quittait l'amour pour la gloire et ne comprenait pas quel triste échange il faisait.*" Vandyck afterwards painted Anna of Saventhem surrounded by her dogs, a picture which was for many years in private hands in Belgium.

The painter was at this period of his life a young and handsome man, and in every way eminently qualified to find favour with the fair sex, for whom he is said to have had an amiable weakness throughout his life. A portrait of himself, painted either just before or just after his journey to Italy, and which now hangs in the National Gallery in London, shows him still little more than a youth. The light brown hair, with more than a tinge of chestnut, waves naturally back from a fine brow, and his well-formed features and refined type give an impression of something feminine in his face—the face of one easily influenced, as Vandyck always was by a more vigorous and masculine mind. This portrait, which differs considerably from that in the Louvre, and which must have been painted some

fifteen years later, was recognised as an authentic portrait by Corneille de Bie before 1661, and engraved by the celebrated Paul Pontius.

Thus, after many delays, it was only in the autumn of 1621, after having completed his share of the work for the decoration of the church of the Jesuits, that Vandyck, at the pressing instance of his master, finally decided to go to Italy. The ludicrous idea that Rubens urged his departure because he was jealous of his successful pupil has never been regarded as anything but a calumny by competent judges, so far was such an attitude removed from anything in the character of Rubens, whose generosity and large-mindedness were always conspicuous in his dealings with his fellow-artists, and for Vandyck especially, his favourite pupil, the master seems to have always acted with almost paternal kindness and affection. Before his departure Vandyck painted a portrait of Rubens and his wife, Helena Forman, a picture now in the Houghton Collection at St. Petersburg. He also presented the master with three pictures on religious subjects—"The Seizure of Christ in the Garden of Olives," "The Crowning of the Saviour with the Crown of Thorns," and a "St. Jerome



THE SEIZURE OF CHRIST IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

(Madrid)

in the Desert." These three pictures remained in the possession of Rubens until his death, when they were bought by the King of Spain, and are now among the twenty canvases by this artist in the Museum of the Prado at Madrid. A duplicate of the first-named is at Corsham House in Wiltshire, but Lord Methuen's picture goes by the name of the "Kiss of Judas," as the work represents the dramatic moment when the traitor betrays his Master by a kiss. The canvas is a very large one, and the numerous figures are more than life size. Rubens thought very highly of this work, and gave it a place of honour in his house.

In return, Rubens started him on his journey southwards on the best horse in his stables, and armed him with letters of introduction to his friends in artistic circles in Genoa, where the great Peter Paul had himself resided for many years. Vandyck was accompanied by a Chevalier Nani, and arrived at Genoa on the 20th of November, 1621. There are many people who maintain that Vandyck would have become a greater and more original painter had he never studied in Italy, and base their argument on the various pictures he is known to have painted before he came under the

influence of the great Italian masters, such as the "St. Martin" at Saventhem, and the "Seizure of Christ" just mentioned. On the whole, however, it may be safely contended that though he may have lost some of his originality and vigour, he gained more than he lost in the study of such masters of colour as Titian and Paul Veronese.

There was an important colony of Flemish artists at Genoa, which was, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, quite a centre of artistic life, and the beautiful city still shone in the reflected glory of Rubens who had been there so long. Among Vandyck's special friends in this little coterie were the brothers Lucas and Cornelis de Wael, whom he painted together, and as one of his earliest portrait groups the canvas has a special interest. It is now in the Capitol Gallery at Rome. He also painted a portrait of their father, the elder de Wael, an artist of considerable reputation at that time, and who seems to have accorded a warm welcome to the protégé of Rubens and to have introduced him to the members of the Genoese nobility, in whose palaces were many of the finest works by Titian and Paul Veronese, the special objects of his study and admiration. This portrait of the elder de Wael, which was



LUCAS AND CORNELIUS DE Wael

engraved by Vandyck himself, shows the old artist in a sort of loose painting smock, a full-pleated ruffle, and a velvet skull-cap. His expression is severe, almost sinister, but the face is intelligent and interesting. The original engraving is in the collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and is signed—Ant : Van Dyck fecit aqua forti.

During the early part of his stay in Genoa Vandyck was much influenced by the work of Michael Angelo, and instead of the transparent tones and luminous shadows with which his work was afterwards associated, his pictures, magnificently drawn and finely conceived, were dark and heavy in tone ; in fact, in many of his portraits painted under this influence, his sitters seem to be passing their life in an eternal twilight. Fortunately this was only a phase, and the young artist presently emerged from under the shadowy influence of Michael Angelo to absorb in turn the matchless qualities of the great colourists of the Venetian school. His admiration for Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and Correggio was unbounded, and, like Rubens, he made entire copies of several of the works of these masters ; he sketched on canvas or paper any head or detail of a picture which appeared to him

masterly in drawing or excellent in colour, and he also bought up any examples of the originals which he could obtain and brought them back with him to Belgium.

But Vandyck wished to do more than merely imitate. He wished to analyse and make himself the master of the methods of the great Italian masters ; to absorb the spirit which had animated them, to utilise the qualities of each for the perfecting of his own individual style, and to crown their technique, their draughtsmanship, and their sense of colour, with his own poetic fancy and graceful distinction. From Rubens he had already learnt a boldness of outline, which, however, he subdued into a refined and judicious line. While learning much of the effects of light and shade from Titian, it was he himself who demonstrated that the chiaroscuro should be subordinate to the general tone of the picture. His "St. Martin" at Windsor rivals the work of Michael Angelo, and at Milan his "Virgin and Child" shows the influence of the great colourist Caliari, and is among Vandyck's masterpieces. Vandyck was essentially receptive, and his works seem to show the selective nature of this receptiveness, for only the best qualities of the best masters were put under contribution for



VIRGIN AND CHILD

the perfecting of his own style, and any exaggerations were rejected, even if they were backed by the names of such artists as Titian and Michael Angelo.

The introduction of Vandyck to the rich aristocracy of Genoa was immediately followed by commissions to paint the portraits of many of their number. To this period may be ascribed the famous Lomellini family, now in the National Collection at Edinburgh, but it is still in Genoa that most of this series of portraits of the Genoese merchant princes can be studied, in the palaces of the Spinola, the Balbi, Durazzo, Brignole-Sala, Adorno Lercari, and other great families. This series is now especially valuable, because, unlike many of his later works, they were entirely the work of his own brush, and the rich and costly robes of the period, the velvets, brocades, and jewels, lent themselves with special felicity to Vandyck's type of portraiture, which even at this time had a definite tendency towards the picturesque.

It would seem probable that most of the mythological paintings of Vandyck date from his residence in Genoa—"The Education of Bacchus" and the "Drunken Silenus" of the Durazzo Gallery, and several others, all showing the influence of Rubens.

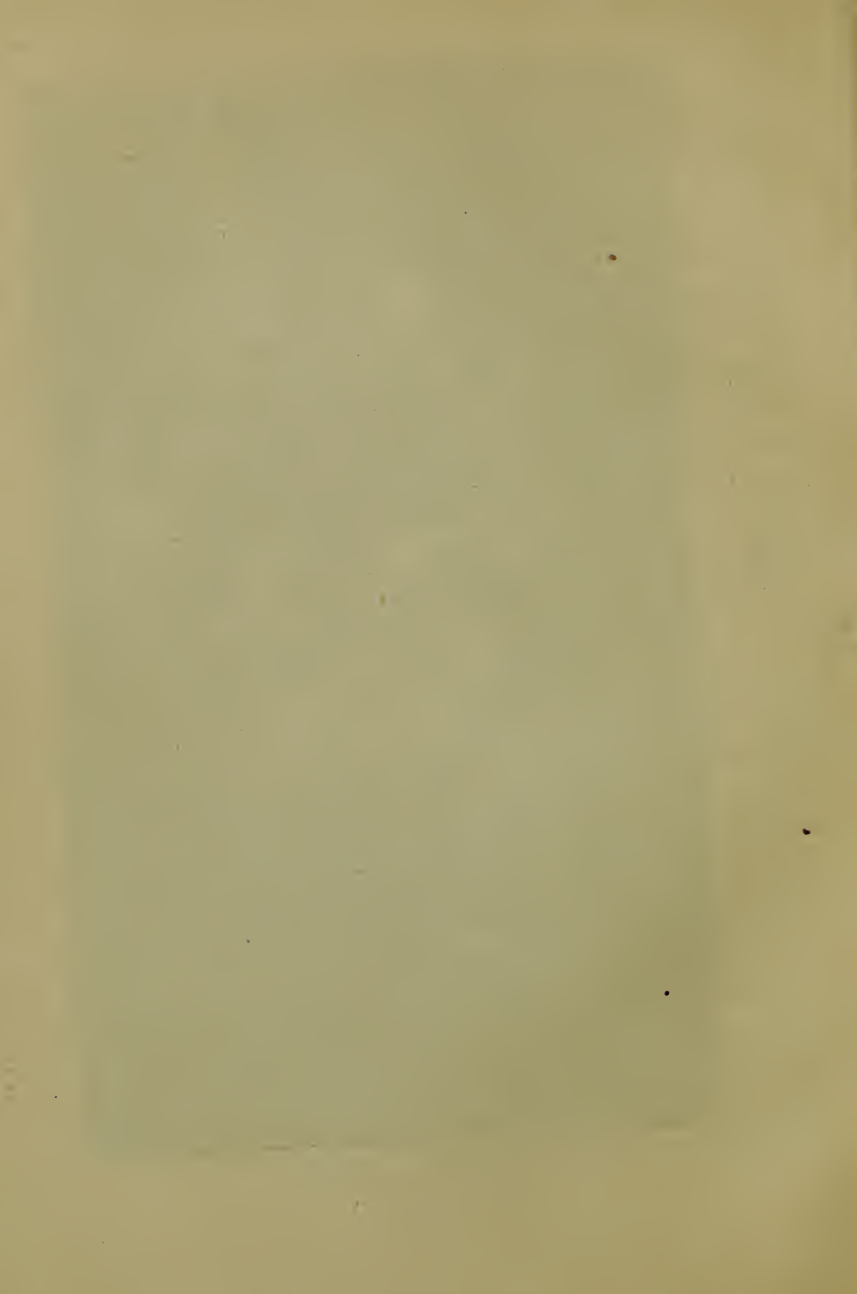
After a stay of about a year in Genoa, he left in 1622 for Rome, and thence again to Florence, where his friend and fellow-townsmen, Justus Suttermans, was at that time employed by the Medici family, the great patrons of art in the Middle Ages. It is said that it was during this visit to Florence that Vandyck first met Sir Kenelm Digby, afterwards to have so important an influence upon his career. From Florence he went *viâ* Bologna to Venice, where he made a special study of Titian and the Venetian School of Painting, and where he left a memento of his visit in the fine picture "The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence" in the church of Santa Maria dell' Orto.

In 1623 Vandyck, after visiting Mantua, returned to Rome, where he was received with open arms, and where his courtly manners and picturesque appearance gained him the sobriquet of the "pittore cavalleresco." His fellow-artists, however, hardly appreciated the exclusive habits of the new-comer, and Vandyck had to put up with a good deal of not wholly unmalicious chaffing from his Bohemian fellow-painters, to whose happy-go-lucky and roystering career his orderly life and sobriety of demeanour seemed a reproach. Vandyck had been accustomed to the dignified social position



CARDINAL BENTIVOGLIO

(Florence)



held by Rubens in Antwerp, whose house was as luxurious and well appointed and his stables as well filled as those of any of his sitters, and had no mind to join the café-loving throng who were content with a very secondary social position, besides which, his natural tastes were towards refinement and culture, qualities rather despised than otherwise by the Latin Quarter of Rome in those days.

One of Vandyck's most influential patrons in Rome was Cardinal Bentivoglio, formerly Papal Nuncio in the Netherlands, and a portrait of whom, now in the Pitti Palace at Florence, is one of the most famous portraits in the world, though perhaps hardly giving scope to the special talents of the artist. The success of this portrait at Rome made Vandyck's name and fortune in that capital, but hardly endeared him to the other members of his profession. He was employed by the Colonna, the Odescalchi, the Barbarini, and other great Roman families, whose portraits he painted, and in whose houses he was always a welcome guest. He painted several important religious pieces during his short sojourn in Rome, among them "The Ascension" and "The Adoration of the Magi," besides other works in private hands at Rome, in the palaces of the Colonna, the

Corsini, and other great families. He seems, however, to have resented the attitude of the painting fraternity, who lost no opportunity, even in public, of annoying him, and, in spite of many entreaties from his patrons to remain, returned to Genoa for a short visit. During his second residence in this city he painted the famous "Holy Family" in the Durazzo Gallery, the "St. Sebastian," formerly at the Balbi Palace and now in Edinburgh, the "Bacchanalia" of the Palazzo Gentili, and the "Saviour Crowned with Thorns" in the Palazzo Spinola.

From Genoa he went to Palermo, where he painted the portrait of the Governor of Sicily, Prince Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy, which is now at Turin, and a sketch of the nonagenarian artist, Sofonisba Anguisciola, whose acquaintance he made during his short stay. An outbreak of the plague forced him to curtail his visit, and no other mementoes of his Sicilian tour exist.

A sketch-book used by Vandyck while in Italy, and containing many interesting pictorial records of his journeys and the various people he met, is still in existence. It was formerly in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, but is now the property of the Clifden family.

CHAPTER III

AN AMBITIOUS RIVALRY

Vandyck meets Nicholas Lanier—Vandyck at Turin—He shows himself to be a physiognomist—He out-colours Titian—Unsurpassed horses and exquisite hands—An unkind story of Vandyck—His “Boy in White” and his “Boy in Blue”—A new warmth of glow and colour—Not a slavish imitator—The famous Lomellini in Edinburgh—A dignity that recalls Velasquez—A wonderful painting in private hands in Belgium—Priceless Vandycks in English country houses—Effects of overwork and ill-health.

ANOTHER acquaintance made by Vandyck in Italy at this period, and who, like Sir Kenelm Digby, was to be instrumental in determining the future career of the young Flemish artist, was Nicholas Lanier, who was travelling in Italy and visiting all the great artistic centres of the country on the look-out for pictures for Charles I., who was a liberal patron of the arts and was forming a collection of pictures. Lanier, whose portrait Vandyck afterwards painted, seems to have been a man of many parts, a talented art-connoisseur and

musician, and in this latter capacity held the office of "Master of the King's Musick."

Besides being a sort of artistic agent and picture-buyer for the king, Lanier was greatly in favour at the English Court, and a few years later, finding himself in Belgium, commissioned Vandyck to paint his portrait. The artist executed the portrait with the greatest care, and is said to have made his model pose seven whole consecutive days without allowing him to see the picture until it was finished. Lanier was portrayed on the canvas as David playing the harp before Saul, a delicate allusion to his musical abilities. The picture is unfortunately lost, but, at the time, it succeeded in its mission. Charles I. was delighted with it, and the picture was indirectly the cause of the king's invitation to Vandyck to come to England.

One of the last towns visited by Vandyck in Italy was Turin, where he painted several members of the House of Savoy, and where in that city are several fine examples of his work, notably the equestrian portrait of Charles Emanuel I., reigning Duke in Turin at the time of Vandyck's visit, and the portrait of the Archduchess Isabel, painted after his return to Antwerp, which is a masterpiece of work-

manship and technique. Already at this early period of his career the young Flemish artist had shown that he was more than a mere portraitist—he was also a physiognomist, and his brush portrayed not only the externals but the character that his analytical mind detected behind the fleshly veil.

At Turin, too, we see Vandyck measuring himself against Titian, and here again it is the “Virgin and Child” that he takes for his subject. The whole work is a marvel of beauty of conception, richness of colour, and harmony of outline. The purple robe of the Virgin is of a depth of brilliancy and colour that even Titian did not attain, and the blue of the mantle is equally successful. The child Jesus, with his white linen garment, is the centre of light in the picture, and the other tones of light and dark seem to be grouped around. In this picture one sees the combination of light and shade of which Titian was a master, but the scheme is a triumph for Vandyck in its charm and ideality. The school of Venice exercised a predominant influence on Vandyck, but his artistic development was so rapid that after about nine months’ stay on the shores of the Adriatic, we find him, still almost a boy, executing masterpieces. He arrived from

Genoa in a state of transition, without a fixed method, and still, so to speak, feeling his way, and then, still a youth of twenty-three, measuring his strength against the giants of art, and in their own particular department of art.

Among the earliest equestrian portraits painted by Vandyck, excepting, of course, the "St. Martin" of Saventhem, were those of "Giulio Brignole" and of "Paulo Balbi," both members of the Genoese nobility, and that of "Charles Emanuel" mentioned above, and though some of his family portraits painted at this era, such as the "Lomellini" and the "Paravicini," rank high among his work, it is in his single figures, and, above all, in his equestrian portraits, that Vandyck shows himself unequalled. The pose of the horsemen both in the Turin canvas and that of a later work, "M. de Moncade," in the Louvre, not to mention the several which he painted of Charles I. of this description, are as nearly perfect as possible, while the drawing and modelling of the animal itself are admirable. He had studied the horse assiduously, both from the anatomical and pictorial point of view, and with such signal success that no one ever surpassed him, and no one, with the exception, perhaps, of Velasquez, ever rivalled



MARCHESE DE BRIGNOLE SALE
(Genoa)

him in this direction. Another characteristic which had already made itself noticeable in his work was the extraordinarily happy execution of the hands of the sitters. These were always exquisitely posed, and painted with a delicacy of colouring and truthfulness of drawing which even Lely never attained. The pictures of Vandyck can almost be recognised by the perfect modelling and posing of the hands, while in the flesh tints also he had no equal. According to de Piles, in his famous *Cours de Peinture*, he kept models of both sexes in his house, from whom he painted the hands of his portraits, and also cultivated the acquaintance of the ladies he knew with beautiful hands, so that they might allow him to copy them. He was thus enabled to delineate them with a surprising delicacy and admirable colouring.

Apropos of the minute attention which he always gave to hands, there is a story quoted by Michiels in his *History of Flemish Art*, which hardly depicts the "preux chevalier of painting," as he was called, in the most pleasing light. The story runs that when painting the portrait of Henrietta Maria of France the princess asked him why he was devoting so much more attention proportionately to her hands than to her face, and Vandyck is re-

ported to have said, "Because I expect to receive from these admirable hands a generous recompense, and one worthy of their perfection." This incident has been quoted as being illustrative of the artist's cupidity towards the end of his life; but there seems little reason to suppose that the artist ever made such an ill-judged remark, for he was always most punctilious about the dignity of his profession, and would hardly have thus voluntarily drawn attention to the matter of money, especially in the case of a woman, and a beautiful one at that; for Vandyck was popularly supposed to have a general weakness for the sex, and, apart from that and his natural refinement, his intercourse with the world of courts, even if it could not make him a diplomat like Rubens, would have prevented his committing such a solecism.

In the Museum at Turin is one of Vandyck's finest canvases, painted during his residence in England, and is a portrait of the three children of Charles I. In this, as in all his pictures of children, Vandyck showed an extraordinary talent for physiognomy. He reproduced with wonderful fidelity the ingenuousness and *naïveté* of the childish character—that condition of mind which is the characteristic of youth independent of rank. But it was during his stay in

Genoa that he first showed his unique talents in this direction, when he painted the famous pair of pictures entitled respectively "L'Enfant Blanc" (The Boy in White) and "L'Enfant Bleu" (The Boy in Blue), so named from the colour of the costume in which they were respectively portrayed.

After a residence of some five years in Italy Vandyck began to turn his thoughts homeward, armed, so to speak, with the secrets of the early Italian painters, and a master of their methods, of which, however, fortunately he never became a slavish imitator. The pictures painted during his Italian sojourn, besides being very valuable from the reason of their being entirely his own work, have a characteristic tone which was not observable before he fell under the Italian influence—a curious warmth and glow of colour, especially in the flesh tints, which gives an impression of sunlight, and which is as different as possible from the warm-toned carnations of Rubens, who was himself an innovator in the manner of painting flesh tints. For a time, at least, Vandyck entirely abandoned the cool, silvery tones characteristic of the Flemish school, and the influence of Giorgione and Titian is plainly seen in his work. Nevertheless, his warm

transparencies and sun-bathed lights were not imitations, for his pictures of this period are unmistakably of Vandyck, and not Italian either in conception or treatment.

One of the best examples of this "sunlight" tone can be seen in the picture of the "Lomellini" in Edinburgh, which was painted at Genoa, and there remained until 1830, when it was purchased by Mr. Andrew Wilson for the National Collection of Scotland. The Edinburgh Gallery possesses yet another of the same period, which is unfortunately so badly placed that it can hardly ever be satisfactorily seen. It represents a single full-length portrait of a man in armour, but the whole picture is very dark, and the figure, though finely drawn and posed, does not stand out sufficiently from the background.

The greater number of the canvases, which still adorn the palaces of the Genoese nobility, exhibit the same warm tone of colour, though as regards the costume and etceteras, Vandyck always affected a sobriety and dignity which recalls Velasquez. The necessary colour was supplied by rich coloured draperies, always subordinated to the figure or figures, which were almost invariably costumed in black, with no further relief beyond the lace collar, or ruff,

worn by the men of the period. A picture which has recently come under my notice, and which is a fine example of Vandyck at his happiest, is a portrait of one of the Spinolas, at present in private hands in Belgium. It represents a single figure of a man of the aristocratic, melancholy type, that the artist loved to depict, standing near a table covered with a red drapery and turning over with one hand the leaves of a large book, apparently an old family record. The hands are magnificently painted, and the ease and grace of the pose most admirable. There are signs that the costume of unrelieved black is painted over red, which seems to give to the material a depth and lustre which even the neglected condition of the picture cannot destroy. There is nothing in the National Gallery of London by Vandyck which can compare either with this work or with the famous family picture of the "Lomellini" in the National Gallery of Scotland, though the royal and private collections in this country, notably those of Windsor, of Althorp, of Petworth, Wentworth Woodhouse, and Wilton, contain priceless specimens of this master's work. Few of these, however, belong to the early period of the Flemish painter's career, and nearly all of them were painted

during the last ten years of his life, when his work sometimes showed signs of the gradual sapping of his strength and energy through overwork and ill-health.

CHAPTER IV

HIS SECOND FLEMISH PERIOD

Back in Antwerp—*Facile princeps* in portraiture—His charming manners—A contemporary character-sketch of him—His full fame delayed—At the end of his resources—Assisted by Rubens—His triumph achieved—Founds a school—Paints the Archduchess Isabel and Marie de Medicis—Advises and helps the engravers—Comes to London 1627—Instals himself near Drury Lane, then the fashionable quarter—The Duke of Buckingham uses his influence to keep him from becoming Court Painter—Thomas, Earl of Arundel, “discoverer” of Vandyck—He returns to Antwerp disappointed.

WITH the return of Vandyck to the city of his birth begins the third period of his artistic career—1625–32—the period in which he did some of his finest work. He seems to have arrived at Antwerp towards the end of 1626, or the beginning of the following year, and made it his headquarters for the next six or seven years, during which he was the rival of Rubens in genre pictures and *facile princeps* in portraiture. He was attached as Court Painter to the Regents Albert and Isabella of

Austria, while his aristocratic appearance and delightful manners made him not only welcome, but sought after, in the highest and most exclusive society in Belgium. Judging from the portraits of Vandyck taken at this time he must have been a handsome man, with a lively and intelligent countenance, and expressive eyes. He is described by the gossipy historians of the time as being short of stature but finely proportioned, graceful in his carriage, and refined in his manners; good-hearted, generous to prodigality, amiable but sensitive, a characteristic of the artistic temperament which might naturally be expected in him. He has been accused of a personal vanity, which caused him to take offence easily, but beyond his love of pleasure and luxurious surroundings, and an amiable weakness for the other sex, he seems to have been singularly free from the human failings which might have made him less envied by his fellow artists.

Although he arrived, so to speak, with a flourish of trumpets from Italy, he did not at first attain the fame which he deserved. Overshadowed by the colossal genius of Rubens, who was a popular idol, and belittled by the jealous criticisms of his less successful rivals, Vandyck was for some time, though not

actually in want, at the end of his resources, and there seems good authority for the story that he was assisted by Rubens, who bought several of his pictures.

According to a contemporary historian, the number of pictures painted by Vandyck which were bought by Rubens at this critical juncture in the young artist's career amounted to eight, and as this estimate corresponds with the list of his works in Rubens' possession at the time of his death, the number seems to have been correctly given. The pictures were—

- (1) "A Portrait of the Emperor Charles V.," a copy from Titian, and dating from Vandyck's Italian tour.
- (2) "Antiope and Jupiter."
- (3) "St. Jerome with an Angel."
- (4) "Another St. Jerome."
- (5) "St. Ambroise."
- (6) "St. Martin."
- (7) "A Bust of St. George."
- (8) "Bust of a Man in Armour."

Of several of these all trace has been lost. They were certainly sold at Rubens' death, and have been scattered all over Europe. The copy of Titian's "Emperor Charles V." has disappeared entirely, but the "Antiope and Jupiter" is at Munich, while there seems every probability that the "St. Ambroise" mentioned

is the one in our own National Gallery, while the "St. Martin" seems to answer in every particular to the one in the Royal Collection at Windsor, and which seems to belong to the earlier period of Vandyck's career, and shows strongly the influence of Rubens.

Gradually, however, his undoubted talent forced recognition even from his rivals, and his long-delayed triumph was achieved by the production of his "Christ" at Termonde and the "St. Sebastian" now at Munich. The tide of fashion turned in his favour ; he painted a portrait of the Archduchess Isabel, and a crowd of distinguished personages loaded him with commissions ; and in a year or two the chief cities of Belgium were vying with each other to obtain work from his brush for the beautifying of their churches and public buildings. He found it necessary to obtain assistance in carrying out the commissions, which were more numerous than he could undertake single-handed, and the studio of Vandyck became almost as popular a "nursery" for young painters as that of the great Rubens himself. His chief historical works were a "Crucifixion" for the church of St. Michael at Ghent and a "St. Augustine" for the church of the Augustines at Antwerp. The former has suffered



ST. SEBASTIAN

(Munich)

much at the hands of inexperienced restorers, but can be estimated at its worth by the fact that it was engraved by Bolswert, Vandyck himself correcting the first proof. The latter, which depicts St. Augustine in ecstasy before the Holy Trinity, was a commission from Marinus Jansenius, a distinguished member of the Order of St. Augustine, who gave the painter six hundred florins for it. According to the terms of the contract, Vandyck was obliged to dress the central figure in the black gown of the Order, a stipulation which made an unfortunate blotch of dark colour in the picture, and destroyed the harmonious effect which would have been effected by clothing the saint in white with the distinctive insignia of the Order as the artist desired. It was, nevertheless, a fine work, and the figures are very happily disposed on the canvas ; drawing, expression, and draperies are all excellent, while the colour is harmonious and rich. Vandyck had the picture engraved by Pierre de Jode, and in this reproduction had a white robe substituted for the black, showing emphatically the improvement he considered it from the point of chiaroscuro. A great number of portraits also date from this period ; besides that of the Archduchess Isabel and Marie de

Medicis, he painted the Cardinal-Infant, the Abbé Scaglia (now in the Museum of Antwerp), the Duc d'Arenburg, and the Duc d'Alva.

According to contemporary historians, it was after Vandyck's return from Italy in 1626 that he conceived the idea of making a sort of picture gallery of those people with whom he was brought in contact, so that sovereigns, politicians, artists, or private individuals find a place in this interesting "Gallery of Friendship." This collection of Vandyck's was the nucleus of the famous *Iconographie*, published in 1645 by Hendricx, the successor to Martin Van den Enden, Vandyck's publisher.

A sketch in black and white or a wash-drawing was sufficient for Vandyck as a guide to him when re-drawing his portrait, and when the idea came to him to have these sketches engraved he employed experienced engravers, to whom he did not spare the advantages of his advice and help. He retouched the proofs, and never let a print go out signed with his name unless he was satisfied that it was an exact facsimile of his own work, so that, thanks to this minute care and intelligent precautions, all the works of this *Iconographie* are of an interest as great as if all the works were



THE DUC D'ARENBERG

from the hand of Vandyck himself, since his influence appears everywhere.

Vandyck took some time to get his collection together—indeed, the greater part of his life. Simon Vouet and Jacques Callot sat to him in Rome and Florence before 1626, and it was not until he came to England for the second time that he was able to add to it the portraits of Inigo Jones, Horace Gentileschi, Mytens, and Sir Kenelm Digby. This series of portraits was published by Martin Van den Enden, and eighty-four of the portraits alluded to in the *Iconographie de Vandyck*, compiled by Hendricx, bear his address.

The subject of the *Iconographie* will be dealt with more fully in considering Vandyck as an etcher, for the famous portrait-painter added to his many accomplishments that of etching on copper, and his work in this department of art deserves attentive study.

The unhappy condition of Belgium at this period, which was groaning under the weight of the Spanish rule and the miseries of religious persecution, seems to have much affected the sensitive temperament of Vandyck, who, helpless in the face of the oppressors, and unable to do anything for his unhappy countrymen, conceived the idea of making the long-promised

visit to England. The jealousy of his professional brothers also may have had some share in the decision made at this juncture to leave Antwerp, where he never shared the popularity enjoyed by Rubens. He was further influenced by the fact that James I. was dead, and that the passion of Charles I. for painting and the fine arts was already known throughout Europe.

He arrived in London at the end of 1627, and established himself at the house of the painter Geldorp, a countryman of his own, who enjoyed the distinction of being Keeper of the King's Pictures, an office which still survives in this country under the title of Surveyor of the King's Pictures and Works of Art. Geldorp never had a great success as a painter, a fact which he himself early recognised, and he had gradually become a sort of middleman between the artists and the patrons of art with whom his official position brought him in contact. He was, therefore, a person of importance, pecuniarily at any rate, to struggling artists. He lived in a large house surrounded by a garden in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, then a fashionable neighbourhood, and here received numbers of well-known people as well as artists in search of the fortune which

was even then supposed to be found in the streets of London. Vandyck was by no means the only painter of importance who lived for some time with Geldorp. Sir Peter Lely, in his pre-famous days, was also a boarder at the house in Drury Lane, and paid his footing, so to speak, with works from his brush, which Geldorp no doubt subsequently disposed of at a considerable profit.

One of the first things Vandyck did on landing in England was to present himself to Lady Arundel, whom he had met previously, and who had urged him many years before to seek his fortune in England. The painter was welcomed warmly by Lord and Lady Arundel, who at once commissioned him to paint a portrait both of the Earl and his wife, and he would doubtless have been presented to the King by Lord Arundel had the latter been enjoying the degree of royal favour which he did subsequently. For the moment the influence of the Duke of Buckingham was paramount with the King, and the Duke, who had his own painters under his protection—namely, Janson and Daniel Mytens—obtained for them all the royal commissions.

The Earl of Arundel was delighted with the portraits, and strongly urged upon Vandyck to

have patience and await an opportunity of bringing his work under the notice of the King. Lord Arundel was himself, at that time, one of the best judges of art in Europe, and always extended a warm friendship to artists of whatever nationality. There was a witty saying credited to Evelyn about him, which, though of course an obvious exaggeration, showed, so to speak, the well-known enthusiasm of the man for art and all that pertained to it: "Lord Arundel thought that one could not be an honest man if one could not draw a little!" This same Thomas, Earl of Arundel, was the first man in England to make a collection of *objets d'art*, curios, and pictures, and set the example to the Duke of Buckingham and Charles I. himself. He had a distinguished appearance, and his fine features, broad brow, and pointed beard, made up a whole eminently suited to the style of portraiture brought in by Vandyck. Books, pictures, sculpture, and architecture—all found in him an intelligent appreciator, and he was in respect of this last the first to perceive the talent of Inigo Jones, while Hollar and Vandyck were also among his "discoveries." The famous patron of art finds a place in Lodge's *Hundred and Fifty Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain*, and

the portrait selected is that engraved from Rubens' picture of him.

Charles I. was at the moment of Vandyck's visit being painted by Mytens, his rival. Vandyck did not fail to see the futility of trying to displace his rival at such a juncture, and finding no chance of being presented to the King, returned in disgust to Antwerp, where he remained from that time until 1630.

CHAPTER V

IN ENGLAND AGAIN

Extraordinary output—His wide variety—His financial difficulties—Naturally extravagant—Small prices compared with present-day terms—One day, one portrait—Details of his methods—Nearly a thousand authentic pictures by Vandyck—Henrietta Maria and her dwarf—Some Vandyck paintings owned by the British aristocracy—Twenty Vandyck portraits of Charles I.—The note of poetry and melancholy in his portraits of the monarch—Death of the Duke of Buckingham, and revival of the influence of Lord Arundel, friend of Vandyck—Some of his pictures in the Louvre—"The Vierge aux Donateurs"—His "Moses saved from the Waters."

AFTER his return to Antwerp, and between that date and the year of his final settlement in England, Vandyck painted a great many portraits as well as religious pieces, and the rapidity and care with which he painted, as well as his extraordinary assiduity, account for the tremendous amount of work he got through. His productiveness was little less than marvellous, and in the case of his portraits especially, his facility enabled him to produce a greater

number in a month than a modern portrait-painter would achieve in a year. Both he, Rubens, Jordaens, de Crayer, and Teniers, all seem to have produced their work at this extraordinary rate. Moreover, there was always in the case of Vandyck's work a pleasing variety. Not content with having discovered one satisfactory harmony in colour, one successful effect in chiaroscuro, or one dramatic or graceful arrangement in the pose of his sitter, he was always seeking for new combinations and improvements on the results he had already obtained.

It is this pleasing variety which gives the works of this great portrait-painter a charm all their own—an unexpectedness and a happy absence of the fault of monotony of treatment so often observable in any painter who produced so many works in so short a time. His industry was only equalled by his ambition, and ended by gradually sapping a constitution never robust, and which seems also to have been weakened by the life he led, in which he tried to combine pleasure with almost continuous work. He never seems to have been free from money troubles, for living up to the hilt of his income as he did, there were often times when his work became merely the means of making money,

and as such, to his artistic temperament, doubtless a double labour. Vandyck has often been accused of cupidity and a somewhat commercial spirit in connection with his art, but even if this were so, it can also safely be said that what he took with one hand he gave away with the other, and no man was more generous and open-handed, or had such large and hospitable ideas of his social duties to friends and acquaintances alike.

The prices paid to Vandyck for his portraits were to our ideas extraordinarily small. He seems to have received the equivalent of forty pounds for a half, and sixty pounds for a full-length portrait, and he often received a good deal less. But against this must be placed the fact that money was more valuable in those days, and the rapidity with which he worked often made it possible, with the help of his assistants, to complete on an average a portrait a day, during certainly one period of his career in this country.

In this connection a few interesting details as regards the technique of the painter and his methods in portrait-painting, as described by de Piles in his celebrated *Cours de Peinture*, may not be out of place. His general habit during his later residence in Antwerp, says this

chronicler, was to appoint both the day and the hour for his sitter, in order not to lose any time, and he worked not more than one hour at a time on any portrait, either in rubbing in or in finishing, so that as soon as his clock informed him that his hour was past, he rose up and made a bow to the sitter to signify that he had finished. He then appointed another hour on some other day, whereupon his servant appeared with a fresh palette and pencil, whilst he was receiving another sitter whose hour had also been appointed beforehand, so that no time was lost. After having lightly dead-coloured the face, he put the sitter into some attitude which he had before contrived, and on grey paper, with black and white crayons, he sketched in the pose and drapery which he designed in a grand manner and with exquisite taste. After this he gave the drawing to the most skilful of the pupils he had about him to paint upon from the sitter's own clothes, which were sent to Vandyck's residence for that purpose. When his assistants had painted the draperies he went over this part of the picture again.

To give some idea of the rapidity and assiduity with which Vandyck painted, it must be remembered that, like Raphael, the Flemish painter

died young, and that although only forty-two at the time of his death in December, 1641, Smith, in his *Catalogue Raisonné*, gives a list of upwards of nine hundred and fifty works by him, of which, of course, a large number were portraits. In the National Portrait Exhibition of 1866 seventy-two portraits of members of the English nobility, painted by Vandyck during his last stay in England, were exhibited, and in the Vandyck Exhibition of 1900 at Burlington House there were no less than a hundred and fifty-six pictures from his brush, besides some fifty oil sketches and drawings, the whole collection being contributed by some sixty different owners of the artist's work. Among these were the late Queen Victoria, the Emperor of Russia, who lent the famous portrait of Lord Wharton from the Houghton Collection at the Hermitage, and the King of Italy, who contributed several interesting chalk sketches, including one of Charles I. on horseback. Among the members of the English aristocracy who lent specimens of Vandyck's work were the Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Sutherland, Lord Bute, the Duke of Abercorn, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Fitzwilliam, who exhibited the celebrated portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria with her

dwarf, Sir Geoffry Hudson. The story runs that when seven years old and thirty inches high, the dwarf was served up in a pie and presented to the Queen by the Duke of Buckingham. The Queen seems to have taken him about with her in the capacity more of a pet than a page, and Sir Geoffry certainly accompanied Henrietta Maria to France in 1644, and while there engaged in a duel with a Mr. Crofts, killing his man at the first shot.

The interesting picture representing the Earl of Strafford and his secretary, Sir Philip Mainwaring, was also exhibited by Lord Fitzwilliam, who lent no less than seven of his works by Vandyck. The Duke of Grafton lent his portrait of Vandyck painted by himself, and so did the late Duke of Westminster, whose portrait of the Painter with the Sunflower is one of the well-known canvases at Grosvenor House. Eight canvases were contributed towards this interesting and representative exhibition by the Earl of Clarendon, a collection which included a splendid full-length portrait of Henrietta Maria, and a family portrait of Lord and Lady Derby with their daughter, Lady Catherine Stanley, afterwards Lady Dorchester. The double portrait of Lord Bristol and the Earl of Bedford was

the only contribution from Althorp, where Lord Spencer possesses some of the finest Vandycks in any private collection. This picture, which contains two full-length figures—Lord Bedford in a scarlet uniform on the right, and Lord Bristol in black velvet on the left—is one of the few authentic canvases which bear the signature of the painter, and is subscribed: “Ant. Van Dyck eques.”

Of Charles I. alone the Court Painter produced no less than twenty portraits. The greater number are in this country, but canvases depicting the unfortunate monarch are also in the Louvre, at the Prado Museum in Madrid, where the King is represented on a white horse, a picture originally in the collection of Philip IV., and in several other of the European galleries. The handsome refined face of the Stuart monarch was the type which Vandyck loved to portray, and the note of poetry and melancholy, almost of tragedy, in his countenance was also skilfully brought out by the painter, who seems to have felt, like so many others, the personal fascination of this unhappy member of the House of Stuart. Of the Queen and of the children of Charles I. innumerable pictures exist by the same hand, and these, too, are scattered throughout

Europe as well as in the great country houses of England ; but, of course, these portraits of the Royal House of Stuart all belong to the last period of Vandyck's art.

Meanwhile in England events were already shaping themselves towards the final settlement of Vandyck in England. In 1628 the Duke of Buckingham had died, and with his removal the Earl of Arundel's influence at Court again revived, and it seems probable that it was at his suggestion that the King ordered through Sir Endymion Porter the "Reynaldo and Armida" referred to in one of the orders for payment to be found in the State Papers Office, and of which the text is as follows :—

23rd March 1629-30.

Endymion Porter
Esq. for a picture
bought of
him.

By Order dated 23rd March 1629.
To Endymion Porter Esq. one of
the Grooms of His Majesties Bed-
chamber the sōme of £78 for one
picture of the Storie of Reynaldo
and Armida bought by him of
Monsieur Vandick of Antwerpe and
delivered to his Mat^{ie} without ac-
compt as per letter of privy seal
20 March 1629.

This is evidently the "Renaud et Armide" now in the Louvre, which played so important a part in the fortunes of Vandyck, and in

which he portrays the dramatic moment of the romantic episode, viz. the compulsory separation of the lovers. The colour is warm and glowing, and gives evidence of the Italian influence ; but it is not by any means typical of the great master's work, and though graceful in conception, is by no means as strong as another of his historical pictures, "Samson betrayed by Delilah," which was engraved by Bonnet. This picture is now at Vienna, and has been commended by various competent judges as the most perfect of Vandyck's compositions which depict an animated motive, a type of picture, however, which was not his forte.

Several other pictures now in the Louvre also belong to this period. Notable among them are those of a "Gentleman and his Child," and a companion picture of a "Lady and her little Daughter." Both are extremely fine portraits, in the best manner of this master, and illustrative also of his extraordinary faculty for painting children. In the first-named of the two pictures the husband is shown standing in an attitude calm and dignified, and dressed entirely in black, while the child, bareheaded, appears to be addressing him and pulling him towards the door. The little



SAMSON BETRAYED BY DELILAH

girl is quaintly dressed in a black dress and a yellow petticoat, a miniature in every way of the costume worn by the ladies of the period, with the exception of the ruff. The companion picture is, however, the more sympathetic of the two, though both have harmony, dignity, and richness of colour.

In the second canvas a lady of about thirty years of age is seated in an armchair with her arms resting on the supports of the seat on either side. Her face shows a sweet resignation and the calm, not of stupidity, but of repose after the storm, and a smile of welcome seems just to hesitate upon her lips. She wears a rich costume of black satin with chains of gold, and two large pearls adorn her ears. The child by her side—a quaint little figure, reflective and grave—seems to be watching also for the coming of someone. This canvas is much lighter in tone than the companion one, and the colours form a harmonious whole.

The “*Vierge aux Donateurs*,” another important work which adorns the Salle Vandyck in the Louvre, was painted about 1628, and is certainly one of the masterpieces of the painter. The Madonna is seated under a tree which is, so to speak, draped to form a sort of

rustic canopy. She is represented as being still very young, indeed, she looks hardly out of her teens, but beautiful and finely formed, with a grace which is both physical and moral. One of the peculiarities of the figure of the Virgin is that she is really of enormous proportions, like many of Titian's figures, and this seems to add to the dignity and grandeur of the picture, already attractive from its exquisite colour and composition. She wears flowing draperies of crimson and a huge green mantle, which is rather wrapped about her than worn. The Infant Christ is also physically attractive, and gives an opportunity for the graceful line and warm colouring of which the great painter is a master. The kneeling couple who bring their gifts to the Holy Child are also admirable, their rugged Flemish type softened by the warm Southern colouring and the exquisite glowing flesh colours which characterise the Virgin and the Child. Altogether, there are few of Vandyck's pictures which are so strong in conception and so masterly in technique. Another remarkable picture painted at this period is "Moses saved from the Waters"; it is in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, and has been admirably engraved.



VIERGE AUX DONATEURS

(Louvre)

CHAPTER VI

SUMMONED BY CHARLES I.

Holland—Public recognition of his talents in royal circles—Panel painting—His amusing visit to Hals—Back in Belgium—His “Erection of the Cross”: one of the world’s masterpieces—Other religious pictures—Effect upon him of the religious persecutions—Queen Marie de Medicis visits Vandyck—Charles I. summons him to England—Sir Balthazar Gerbier’s claim to our interest.

THE fame of the Flemish painter had meanwhile spread to Holland, and in the year 1630 Vandyck was honoured by a “command” to that country to paint the Stadtholder and his wife and children. The portraits gave great satisfaction, and led to various other commissions from Prince Frederick Henry, as well as in every direction all over the country; for the signal having been, so to speak, given in high quarters, Vandyck at once became a fashionable artist. The portrait of Princess Emilie de Solms, wife of the Stadtholder, was sold among others in 1703, when the collection of the Stadtholder was sold at the Chateau of Loo, and the

picture is now at Vienna. It shows the Princess dressed in the Spanish costume of the period, with a chain of gold round her neck.

His visit to the Netherlands was not long, but it had in many ways an important influence upon the career of the great Antwerp painter, both as a public recognition of his talents in royal and official circles, and as affording him the opportunity of studying a new artistic milieu. The celebrated portrait of Martin Pepyn, which was formerly in the palace of William II. of Holland, shows a curious return to Vandyck's first manner, and is apparently to be attributed to his having seen and admired some of the work of Antoine Mors, a famous portrait-painter of the sixteenth century, and who was a worthy successor to the brothers Van Eyck and Memling. His return to the old Flemish style, which he learnt with his first master, Van Balen, gives the student of technique opportunity of seeing what Vandyck might have become without the influences which surrounded him at his most impressionable period during his Italian tour. His own natural precision of drawing and happiness of posing, combined with the wonderful brilliance and transparency of colour affected by the old Flemish masters, makes an interesting study

both for painters and amateurs. This picture, sold with the rest of the collection of William II. of Holland in 1850, was one of the few instances in which Vandyck painted on wood, and he seems to have chosen a panel rather than a canvas, in order to obtain as nearly as possible the results attained by Antoine Mors, who generally employed this, the old-fashioned medium. The picture was engraved by Bolswert, and is described in Michiel's *History of Flemish Painting*, and was at the time of publication of that work in the collection of M. Edouard Kums, at Antwerp.

It was during a short stay in Haarlem that the amusing visit of Vandyck to his fellow-painter Hals took place, and of which Houbraken gives so diverting an account. The great Flemish portrait-painter much admired the work of Frank Hals, and had on several occasions tried to see him, only to find that Hals was as usual engrossed with his boon companions in some neighbouring tavern. All direct methods having failed, the visitor resorted to stratagem, and sent to say that a stranger was waiting to have his portrait painted. The ruse was successful, and when Hals appeared he was told that his visitor could only sit for two hours. The artist seized

his palette and brushes, and working with the wonderful boldness and skill of which he was a master, finished the portrait in the given time. The anonymous visitor expressed his satisfaction with the portrait, at the same time observing that it seemed a fairly easy process, and that he would like to try what he could do. Entering into the spirit of the joke unconsciously, Hals gave up his place at the easel, and sat in turn to his model. Hals soon saw from his manipulation of the brushes that the stranger was someone, at any rate, quite at home with his materials, but when he saw the portrait of himself he immediately embraced his visitor, exclaiming, "You are Vandyck; no person but he can do what you have done."

Of the ultimate fate of these two interesting portraits there is no record. Hals' improvisation and happy-go-lucky temperament would be doubtless unable to resist the opportunity of making a good bargain by selling the work of a man who at the moment was in the zenith of his fame, and all trace of both his portrait by Vandyck and that of Vandyck by Hals seems to have vanished.

Shortly after this visit to Haarlem, Vandyck, in spite of many invitations to stay in Holland,

returned to Belgium, and it was to this period that one of the most important of the painter's religious pictures belongs. This is the famous "Erection of the Cross," at Courtray, which, besides being one of his greatest works, may also be ranked as one of the masterpieces of painting in the world. The picture is gloomy and tragic in the extreme: the Cross is seen against a stormy background, and the Saviour is being nailed to it amid a crowd of hostile faces. The features of the martyred Christ express, however, neither the resignation nor the religious ecstasy which we are accustomed to find in the treatment of this subject elsewhere. The face of the tortured Man is rather that of an innocent victim mutely questioning the justice of His punishment, and a vivid expression of grief takes the place of the conventional attitude of patient suffering. The figure of the Saviour is full of grace and dignity, and even the powerful and athletic frames of his executioners seem to fade into insignificance before the subtle power and force depicted in the recumbent and helpless figure of the Christ.

Other religious pictures which were painted about the same time as the above masterpiece are "The Infant Christ and St. John," "Susan

and the Elders," and the "Christ in the Tomb," now in the possession of the Munich Gallery. All these religious subjects were painted by Vandyck at a time of appalling religious intolerance, when the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition were introduced unopposed in the Flemish States, and when the torture and public degradation and execution of anyone, man or woman, supposed to have "dealings with the Evil One," which was apparently the monomania of the Church at that time, was a common sight in the streets of Antwerp. The horror of these human sacrifices, and the tragedy of the whole situation, seems to have affected Vandyck more and more strongly as time went on, and the tragic influence seems to have inspired many of his most eloquent canvases. The expression of the Holy Victim in the "Erection of the Cross" just mentioned, and the despairing attitude of the mourners in the "Christ in the Tomb" at Termonde, are inexpressibly tragic, and vividly portray the very expressions which the painter must have seen on the faces of his unhappy fellow-townsmen when their dear ones were on some trivial pretext torn from them to torture and death, to satisfy the ceaseless thirst for blood which characterised the Apostles of the Gospel of



CHRIST IN THE TOMB

(*Nuremberg*)



Charity, as the Church, with unconscious irony, still called itself.

There are several other religious pictures which seem to belong to this the last residence of the painter in Belgium, among them the picture of the Virgin holding the corpse of her Son, which now hangs in the Museum at Antwerp, as well as a "Christ taken down from the Cross," and supported by St. John and the Virgin Mary, in the same Gallery. "The Marriage of Mary and Joseph," painted for the Jesuits, in 1631, was one of the last sacred subjects treated by Vandyck before leaving for England. It was taken by the Austrians when, in 1776, Pope Clement XIV. suppressed the Order of the Jesuits, and removed by them to Prague, whence it passed to Vienna.

Vandyck, however, still continued to paint portraits, although the demand for his religious subjects for churches and monasteries occupied a good deal of time ; and just at this juncture Marie de Medici took refuge in Belgium with her suite, and Vandyck was commissioned to paint the portrait of the widow of Henri IV., who was then between fifty and sixty years of age. This portrait, which was engraved by Paul Pontius, so delighted the Queen that she came to visit Vandyck in his own house, an

honour which was frequently accorded to the great Rubens. Francois de Moncade, Marquis d'Aytona, who was Minister to the Infanta Isabella, had already paid his respects on behalf of the Government to the distinguished refugee, and it was probably through his recommendation that the Flemish painter, who had already painted the Archduchess Isabelle, was recommended to Queen Marie. Vandyck also made portraits of several of the Queen's relatives and household, but none of these are so important as the portraits of De Moncade painted about this time. Two of these hang in the Louvre, one a bust, and one equestrian. The latter, though dignified and well posed, is hardly one of Vandyck's finest equestrian portraits, probably because the artist did not find De Moncade an inspiring subject, and the war-like accoutrements seem scarcely in character with the type of face of the minister.

All this time Lord Arundel seems to have been using his influence to induce Charles I. to send for Vandyck, but though the royal collector greatly admired the Flemish master's work, of which he had seen several examples, notably the portrait of Nicholas Lanier and the historical canvas of "Rinaldo and Armida," he seems to have been strangely disinclined to



THE INFANTA ISABELLA, DAUGHTER OF PHILIP II

make any direct effort to bring Vandyck to England. Indirectly, however, he made known his wishes to Sir Balthazar Gerbier, at that time the British Special Envoy to the Archduchess Isabelle, and who had been already painted by Vandyck, and charged him to urge the painter to come to England, but not to give Vandyck any idea from whom the instigation came. The great artist, though actually extremely anxious to come, was somewhat piqued at the manner of the invitation, and for some time the envoy and the painter carried on the same game of dissimulation. Among other curious subterfuges to which Vandyck had recourse, in order that he might be openly summoned to England, was that of denying having painted one of his own pictures which had been presented to the King. The authenticity of the canvas, however, was vouched for by Rubens and the middleman, in whose hands it had remained from the time of leaving Belgium for England, and the imbroglio finally ended as Vandyck desired it should, in his being summoned to England, probably to identify his own picture, though his touchiness on the subject of the respect due to him in his professional capacity probably was responsible for a more politic and complimentary invitation being given.

The Sir Balthazar Gerbier who was identified with this episode in the great painter's career was curiously enough a native of Belgium—Sir Balthazar Gerbier d'Ouvilly, of Antwerp, to give him his full title. He was born about 1580, came, like so many soldiers of fortune in those days, to England, and so ingratiated himself with the Duke of Buckingham, then all-powerful, that he soon became quite a personage of importance about the Court, and recommended himself in exalted quarters by the organising of various projects connected with art and *belles-lettres*. He accompanied the Duke of Buckingham to Spain, and was employed in connection with the treaty of marriage which the Duke went over to arrange. He was himself a painter and an architect, and in this respect of not inconsiderable talent. Immediately after the accession of Charles I. he was employed in Flanders on a diplomatic mission, was knighted by the King, and became a naturalised British subject. Beyond this we know little of him. Indeed, almost his only claim to interest lies in the fact of his intimacy with Vandyck, and of the part he played in bringing him to England.

CHAPTER VII

VANDYCK AS ENGRAVER

The *Iconographie*—Vandyck's engravings—Physiognomist as well as artist—Twenty-one authentic plates—Some doubtful ones—He engraves portraits of distinguished engravers—His mastery of line—M. Charles Blanc's criticism—Special qualities in his etching.

PERHAPS one of the most interesting records of Vandyck's career previous to his final settlement in this country is the famous *Iconographie*, a collection of portraits of contemporary artists and celebrities, afterwards added to, and published first by Martin Van Enden, and subsequently collected, added to, and republished by Hendricx, after Vandyck's death, under the title of *L'Iconographie de Vandyck*. This collection is doubly interesting from the fact that it comprises a limited number of plates actually etched by Vandyck himself, who, in addition to his extraordinary talents as a painter, has thus come down to posterity as one of the finest etchers in *aqua-fortis*.

When Vandyck decided to ply the etching

needle, he sought character above all things in his models. He wished to find someone who would do justice to his talent, and he selected, not the most eminent, but the most effective model among his acquaintances. Snyders and de Wael both possessed faces of striking originality, which lent themselves well to portrayal in Vandyck's simple and decisive line and to his undoubted talent for physiognomy. Van den Wouver, a friend of Rubens, of whom there is also a picture by Vandyck at St. Petersburg, was yet another model selected, and the artist also made a clever sketch of Vorstermann, which is one of his most powerful works in *aqua-fortis*.

The success of the first portraits etched by himself, or under his immediate supervision, was probably responsible for the idea of forming a gallery of his illustrious contemporaries. Vandyck excelled in portraiture; he had proved himself a master of the etcher's needle, and as a result he seems to have conceived the notion of publishing a series of portraits of celebrities, to which new names might be added year by year. At the outset of the scheme Vandyck executed several of the plates himself, but later on the artist contented himself with making the sketches or drawings

for the professional engravers. It may safely be said that the majority of Vandyck's etchings were executed during his third period and before he settled in England, when the volume of work which overwhelmed him would have made the slow process of engraving too expensive a method of exploiting his talents. Yet it is quite possible that many, if not all, the plates of the *Iconographie* were actually published after his departure from Flanders, and that he only supervised the publications of Van Enden from his residence on the banks of the Thames.

M. Gratet-Duplessis considers that only twenty-one of the many etchings credited to Vandyck were genuinely executed by him, though Mr. William Hookham Carpenter, on the contrary, in his *Catalogue of Etchings* by that master, attributes twenty-seven plates to him. In the exquisite publication of Amand-Durand there are reproductions of twenty-one of the finest etchings of Vandyck, the text being supplied by no less an authority than Georges Duplessis, a publication in which the art-lover can admire some of the finest specimens of engravings that have come down to posterity. These twenty-one prints comprise all those of which actual proof exists that they were the

personal work of Vandyck, and include the famous one of himself in which only the head is finished, even the position of the shoulder being only indicated by a single line. All are distinguished by the same delicacy and precision of drawing, the same exquisite discrimination of character, which his pictures have already made familiar to the admirers of the great Flemish master. Most of them are portraits of men whom Vandyck knew well and lived among on terms of intimacy, and whose habits were therefore as familiar to him as their features. Evelyn in his *Sculptura* states that Vandyck assisted Vorstermann, the famous engraver, in the prints which the latter executed from his pictures, and "to show what honour was done this art by the best of painters, Sir Anthony Vandyck did himself etch various things in *aqua-fortis*, especially a 'Madonna,' 'Ecce Homo,' 'Titian and his Mistress,' 'Erasmus Rotterdamus,' and touched several of the heads before mentioned to have been engraved by Vorstermann."

Vandyck certainly did the "Christ with the Sceptre" and "Titian and his Mistress," but the "Holy Family," with which he is credited by some of the critics, can hardly be considered as coming from the same hand as the other

plates. The bust of "Seneca" seems open to the same objection, and certainly does not rank among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the etcher's art, to which Vandyck's other productions undoubtedly belong. Other doubtful plates are those of "Philippe Le Roy," "Josse de Momper," and "Snellincx," which seem rather to be the handiwork of a clever pupil working under the eye of his master from sketches drawn by him.

These sketches, drawn for the collection of celebrities, were executed by Vandyck in monochrome on small panels, and the subjects were chiefly painters, savants, or amateur art collectors, with whom Vandyck was brought in contact, for only twenty-three portraits either of men or women are to be found in the *Iconographie*, engraved by reason of their military, political, or social importance. The greater number of these sketches *en grisaille* were engraved under Vandyck's direction by Vorstermann, Paul Pontius, Pierre de Jode (the younger), and Bolswert. The artist by no means demanded of his engravers that they should entirely sink their individuality; he did not demand a uniformity of style, or an identical interpretation, nor did he insist upon the plates being of a certain size or shape. The

conditions of work varied according to the drawing or painting which the engraver had to reproduce, and the only stipulation was that Vandyck should himself have the right to direct operations, at the same time leaving each artist free to display his own particular talents.

Of the hundred and fifty portraits which compose the *Iconographie*, of which Vandyck's collection was the nucleus and the origin, two-thirds are artists, Flemish or otherwise, but there are also people of rank, important as connoisseurs or from their political position. Among these are Henri Liberti, Nicholas Rockox, the Antwerp Burgomaster, Philip Le Roi (a portrait of whose wife adorns the Wallace Collection), Peter Stevens and Cornelius Van der Geest, while the aristocracy of the Church is represented by Anthony Triest, Bishop of Ghent, whose portrait is at the Hermitage, John Malderno, Bishop of Antwerp, John de la Faille, Alexander Scaglia, Anthony de Tassis, Paul Halmalius, and many others.

But it is chiefly the artists who have reason to be grateful to Vandyck and the *Iconographie* for a celebrity to which in many cases their work did not entitle them. Rubens himself figures among the professional brothers of

Vandyck, but there were many whose names are hardly known outside their native town who are thus secured a world-wide fame. Among these are Francis Franck, the younger, Jordaens, Seghem, Theodore Rombouts, Martin Pepyn, Cornelius Schut, Snellincx, Suttermans, the de Vos family, the de Waels, father and sons, Jose de Momper, John Wildens, Van Uden, and Adrian Brouwer, the depicter of drinking bouts, or "pictor grillorum," as the legend under his name describes him. But in addition to the Flemish artists, several members of the contemporary Dutch school of painting find a place in the *Iconographie*, among them Daniel Mytens, Gerard Houthorst, Cornelius Poelembourg, John Livens, Palamedes Palamedessen, John Van Ravensteyn, Henry Stenwyck, Mirevelt, Honduis, and Van Voerst, the last two engravers, while Callot and Vouet, both Frenchmen, also find a place in this gallery of talent.

But it is to the plates originally engraved by Vandyck himself that the most interest attaches, and these comprise, in addition to those already mentioned, the splendid portrait of Jean Breughel and an equally fine one of Antoine Cornelissen, a well-known art collector of Antwerp, and the masterly portrait of Paul

Pontius, perhaps one of the most speaking and charming likenesses possible even to Vandyck, and showing all the grace of pose and precision of drawing characteristic of his handiwork. This portrait of Pontius is one of the few entirely finished productions by Vandyck on copper. The portrait of Snyders, a famous painter of animals and still life, and a native of Antwerp, is another little masterpiece of technique from the needle of Vandyck himself. The great animal painter is singularly unlike what one would expect. He has in this portrait, and indeed in all those which his illustrious friend painted of him, more the air of a contemplative philosopher, a scholar and a thinker, than the recorder of animal life. Only the head and the commencement of the coat are depicted in this drawing of Snyders, but incomplete as it is, this etching is one of the most pleasing examples of Vandyck as an engraver, and though so slight the countenance is full of a melancholy distinction and gentle gravity. Yet another portrait of a fellow-artist is that of Suttermans, and the figure in this, though also incomplete as to detail, shows one of the poses so characteristic of Vandyck's portraits. The left hand is on the hip, and the right hand, just suggested in outline, holds



SNYDERS THE PAINTER

in place a drapery or cloak slung over the shoulder.

One of the most powerful of the series of etchings on copper is the portrait of Lucas Vorstermann, himself the famous engraver of many of the series collected by Vandyck. This portrait has been admirably reproduced by Durand, of Paris, and with that of Paul Pontius, also an engraver, is one of the most finished pieces of engraver's work that the Flemish portrait-painter ever did. Perhaps his idea was to show the most famous engravers of the day that he, too, could compete with them in their own line—a harmless form of vanity from which Vandyck was not wholly free. Vorstermann is depicted with all the grace and poetry which the master knew so well how to put into his work. The fine head, with its crop of abundant hair, refined features, and melancholy eyes, seems to suggest the temperament of the poet and the enthusiast, and his tragic career seems to be almost foretold in this life-like portrait—as if, indeed, Vorstermann, when he sat for it, already felt the advance of the terrible mental malady which eventually brought his career prematurely to a close.

Speaking generally of the work of Vandyck

as an engraver, we can but admire the extraordinary precision of drawing and grasp of the possibilities of line which enabled a painter to exercise with such marked success a difficult process like that of etching on metal without the long term of apprenticeship usually deemed necessary. It must be remembered also that in this process nothing can be left to the risk of improvisation, no effect can be produced by modification of work already done, so that only the most certain hand and the most confident draughtsman can successfully achieve the perfect engraving. The effects which to the uninitiated might be due to a chance inspiration are the results of a slow and methodical process. The etching must succeed at its first trial, and it is this fact that makes the more valuable to the artistic connoisseur the few really perfect engravings which are straight from the graving tool of a master of his art and undisfigured by the cautious and temporising hand of an inexperienced craftsman.

M. Charles Blanc, a critic of the greatest authority, has given an eminently masterly criticism of the etchings of Vandyck in the following words :—

“ Take the plates of Vandyck, notably his portraits of artists, in the state of pure etch-



LUCAS VORSTERMANS

The original plate is signed "Antonius van Dyck fecit"

ings, before the *burin* has touched them : they are exquisite works produced by slight means ; they are sketches, but perfect. Snyders, Francis Franck, John Breughel, Vorstermann, de Vos, and others, live in them ; they move, speak to you, call you, extend their hands to you. With a few strokes of the needle Vandyck has indicated the structure of the forehead, the foreshortening of the temple, the projection of the cheek-bones, the cartilage of the nose, the modelling of the cheek and of the chin. Two strokes more, a few points added here and there, a little biting, and you can touch those beautiful hands. But what has come over those marvellous etchings when the Antwerp engravers have finished them with the burin ? What heaviness ! what coldness ! what a suppression of all the tones of life."

CHAPTER VIII

VANDYCK COMPARED WITH RUBENS

Vandyck's technique—His great characteristic : the vein of ideality and poetry—Vandyck contrasted with Rubens—His many variations of style—Sometimes difficult to distinguish his paintings from those of Rubens—Sir Joshua's admiration of Vandyck—His chiaroscuro compared with Rembrandt's—Few historical productions—His sympathetic treatment of religious subjects.

BEFORE embarking upon an account of the last period of Vandyck's career, passed, with the exception of a few months, entirely in this country, it will be interesting to observe some of the characteristics of the painter's technique and the differences which distinguished his work from that of his great master Rubens, whose work at that time was, so to speak, the standard of art by which all other productions were measured.

Perhaps the great characteristic which marked the work of Vandyck was the vein of ideality and poetry which can be traced in all his pictures, in spite of the extraordinary differences

of method which he adopted at successive periods of his career. It was in this very variety and facility of imbibing the different styles of painting with which he was brought in contact that Vandyck differed so greatly from Rubens. The great Peter Paul had, like his forerunner Van Eyck, an extraordinary uniformity of manner. His pictures were always the same in treatment from his earliest to his latest periods, varying only in degree of excellence, and his characteristic style of composition, his technique and marvellous carnations, are recognisable by the veriest amateur.

With Vandyck this was not so. His work at different periods shows so many variations of style, such differences of technique, that it requires the eye of an expert to recognise many of his productions, which show a variety closely allied to imitativeness. He painted pictures which might successively have been taken for the work of Rubens, of Correggio, of Titian, or of Paul Veronese, according to the influences of his artistic milieu at the time, and it was only after his permanent settling in England that these variations cease to become more noticeable. His admiration for the early Italian masters to a certain extent obliterated

the traces of Rubens' influence, though his early training can be recognised even in his later work.

Rubens, in spite of his studies in Italy and his admiration for the antique, never cultivated the elegance and delicacy of the Italian masters as did his illustrious pupil, though we learn that he did not disdain to copy many of the great masterpieces of Italy during his long stay in that country. The figures of Rubens, when compared with the works of Correggio and Titian, and the great Caliari, appear a little coarse in their strength, and are lacking in the ideality and grace with which his pupil managed to endow his figures. Rubens' women were coarse, fleshy, and wanting in spirituality and poetic interest in spite of their physical perfection, and the exquisite treatment of the flesh tints. His male figures were muscular giants, splendid physical specimens, but again wanting in the romantic quality even when most heroic. Yet his drawing and the composition of his large pieces was dramatic and bold to the degree of audacity, and it was this quality of audacity joined to the splendid fertility of his imagination which carried him triumphantly over the heads of every artist of his time.

Yet he lacked a quality which his pupil, less brilliantly endowed, possessed in a very high degree, for, as Michiels in his *History of Flemish Painting* truly says, "Nature had given to the pupil a more poetic sentiment in the ideal meaning of the word." Rubens shines above all in the magnificence of his execution, by the skilfulness of his brush, and by his talent for composition, but he never left the realistic side of things to appeal to the intelligence and imagination in his pictures. Consequently, his canvases rarely afford food for thought or open up fields of reflection to the spectator, even while they most dazzle the senses. The canvases of Vandyck, on the other hand, frequently unite poetry with beauty of form. His work has more qualities than the eye at first perceives, and the painting only forms, so to speak, a transparent veil, behind which are gradually unfolded beauties which it requires the subtlety of intelligence to discover and a sympathetic condition of mind to appreciate.

All the work of Vandyck is, in a manner, more suave, more harmonious than that of Rubens, for the reason that its qualities are more evenly balanced. It appeals to the mind as well as to the senses, whereas the work of

the older master inspires little beyond a sensation of bewilderment and admiration at its outward splendour without calling forth the subtler emotions of the intellectual faculty. Vandyck's types have more elegance and the posing more dignity ; an exquisite sensibility and a subtle distinction characterise the work of the younger man, who, nevertheless, could not hope to equal his master in power, originality, and boldness of conception. Vandyck could never have produced the masterpieces of Rubens, but neither could the latter approach Vandyck in his own particular line. For instance, Rubens could never have painted the famous portrait of Snyders, which his pupil is supposed to have produced when merely a stripling of twenty or so, and which is a monument of exquisite painting, perfect modelling, and, above all, poetic sentiment in the highest degree.

If, indeed, as M. Michiels points out, only the difference in the work of the two were to be considered, Vandyck might be considered the greater artist, but it must also be remembered that to a certain extent Vandyck made use of the manner invented by Rubens. The pupil imbibed the methods of his master, and then modified them to suit his own tastes

and talent. He softened and harmonised the violences of Rubens, and increased the grace and beauty of his forms, while detracting in a degree from their power. So much did Vandyck utilise his knowledge of Rubens' methods and technique in some of his pictures that it is difficult sometimes to distinguish the work of the pupil from the master. An instance of this may be cited in the "Pieta" at Amsterdam, which, ascribed to Vandyck, is so much in the manner of Rubens that it has often been ascribed by competent judges to the elder artist, and this difference of opinion, even between connoisseurs, shows how much Vandyck's first manner, especially in his sacred pictures, must have resembled his master's.

In Du Fresnoy's account of the Principal Painters, the author says: "Vandyck was he who best comprehended all the rules and general maxims of his master, and who has even excelled him in the delicacy of his carnations, and in his cabinet pieces; but his taste in the designing part was nothing better than that of Rubens."

The difference between Rubens' treatment of the female figure and that of Vandyck has been sufficiently accentuated already, but a criticism by Sir Joshua Reynolds on the same subject

will not be without interest. He remarks that the judgment passed upon an ancient painter would apply equally to Rubens' female figures, viz., "that their figures look as if they were fed upon roses." Yet the works of Rubens have that peculiar property always attendant upon genius of arresting the attention and enforcing admiration in spite of all their faults. It is owing to this fascinating power that the performances of those painters with which he is surrounded, though they have fewer defects, yet appear tame and insipid.

In comparing Rubens with his contemporaries, Sir Joshua Reynolds further remarked that "simplicity is no match against the splendour of Rubens, at least at first sight, and few stay to consider longer. The best pictures of the Italian school if they ornamented the churches of Antwerp would be overpowered by the splendour of Rubens: they certainly ought not to be overpowered by it; but it resembles eloquence which bears down everything before it, and often triumphs over superior wisdom and learning." What wonder, then, that Vandyck should have been eclipsed by the abundant genius of his master. Sir Joshua seems to have been a great admirer of Vandyck's work, and in speaking of a "Cruci-



THE CRUCIFIXION

fixion" by him, declares that "the form and character are of a more elegant kind than those we see commonly of Rubens."

Vandyck's manipulation of the chiaroscuro of his pictures was in his best works particularly happy, and he often obtained that effect of gradation of light and shade without the heavy shadows employed by Michael Angelo, Titian, and several masters of the Italian school, by his arrangement of contrasting colours. He would employ a rich-toned drapery to form a background for a light colour, instead of making an artificial shadow and an arranged illumination of some portion of the picture. In this way he obtained the contrasts he required in the simplest and least troublesome way, and in this respect was almost the equal of Rembrandt, just as he was worthy to be ranked with Rubens as a colourist, and as a portraitist with Titian and Velasquez.

His historical productions, though few in number compared to his other works, are amply sufficient to show that he might have attained excellence in that direction had he made it his exclusive pursuit. In his sacred pictures he excels in those which appeal to the sympathy and pity of the observer, and the

suffering of the Saviour and the grief of the Virgin are admirably depicted in all his works treating of the Crucifixion and kindred subjects.

CHAPTER IX

HIS LIFE IN ENGLAND

Honoured by Charles I.—The King goes to Blackfriars by barge to visit him—The King knights him—He sets a fashion in portraiture—His house a gathering-place for Court and Society—Praised by the poets—A wave of artistic enthusiasm—Overwhelmed with commissions—Three portraits a week—He earns about £20,000 a year—His portraits of Charles and Henrietta Maria.

UPON his arrival in England Vandyck was at first afforded hospitality in the residence of Edward Norgate, a friend of the British Ambassador to the Netherlands and of Lord Arundel, and during this time his expenses were being defrayed by the Crown, a fact attested by a Privy Seal warrant bearing the date of May 21st, 1632, and the painter seems to have been treated with great consideration and respect. His host, Mr. Norgate, was a well-known art connoisseur, and had been sent into Italy to buy pictures for Lord Arundel, who afterwards gave him the appointment of Windsor Herald. He was also one of

the Clerks of the Signet, and from letters in His Majesty's State Paper Office written by him it appears that he was nearly connected by marriage with Sir Balthazar Gerbier.

Now that the great Flemish artist had actually been summoned to England, Charles I. seems to have resolved to honour him in every way, and in order to make him feel that England was henceforth to be his home, was very anxious to find him a suitable residence. This latter fact is proved by a document also in the State Paper Office in the handwriting of Sir Francis Windebanke, headed "Things to be Done," one of which is "to speak with Inigo Jones concerning a house for Vandike." The house, however, was never built, but the artist was accommodated with a suite of apartments at Blackfriars as well as rooms in what was known as the King's House, Eltham Palace, which appears to have been a huge royal summer residence, apparently utilised more as Hampton Court is now, as a caravanserai for those who had rendered services to the Crown, than as a royal palace.

In addition to his powers as a painter, which the taste and discrimination of Charles I. were not long in appreciating at their value, Vandyck had a distinguished appearance and a charm

and refinement of manner which could not fail to win the favour of the King, and it was a common occurrence for Charles to go in his barge from Whitehall to Blackfriars to see Vandyck, who had been made Principal Painter in Ordinary to their Majesties as early after his arrival as July, 1632. Within a few months, too, the royal favour had been further signalised by the bestowal of the honour of knighthood, as well as various personal gifts from the King, including a portrait of his royal patron set in brilliants.

Vandyck was in every way fitted to portray the men and women of one of the most picturesque periods in English history, and had it been possible for Charles I. to have had his choice of all the great artists since the Renaissance, he could not have found one better adapted, both as regards temperament and taste, to the spirit of the time, or more in accord with the dignity and distinction which characterised the Court of the Stuarts at that period. Foreigner though he was, no other painter has ever succeeded in so thoroughly identifying himself with English life, or so successfully caught the type of the national physiognomy as did Vandyck. Yet he knew well how to imbue even the somewhat stiff and

awkward English gentleman with all the dignity and serenity of bearing which might characterise the Spanish grandee without ever detracting from the exactitude and lifelikeness of the portrait. He became to a certain extent more than the supremely successful exponent of a phase and a style, for he set a fashion by his portraiture so that the appearance given by him to his sitters became a model of style which all tried to imitate.

So perfect a sympathy between a painter and his patrons could only have been the result of a natural and deep-seated affinity in character and tendencies, so that it is by no means surprising to find that Vandyck's house at Blackfriars was more than merely the studio of the greatest portrait-painter of the age—it was a favourite gathering-place for the King and the members of the Court and the society who revolved around him, where all could meet on the common ground of love of art, of pleasure, and the luxuries of life. For in respect of this last Vandyck was in no way behind the most extravagant of the Court gallants, and he indulged to the full his natural bent towards a sumptuousness of *entourage* and dress, and an open-handed hospitality which would not have been unbecoming in one of the greatest nobles

of the realm. Nor in his success was he arrogant, but always of gentle, amiable manners, good-hearted to the point of weakness, and appreciative of the talents of his fellow-artists, to whom he was always generous and helpful. In their interest he founded an Artists' Club in London, on the lines of the famous Guild of St. Luke's in Antwerp, and of which the meeting-place was an old tavern in Fleet Street, destroyed like so many other interesting landmarks in the Great Fire of London.

The poets of the time were prodigal in his praises, both in respect of his character, so congenial to their own, his appearance, and his talent, while the ladies of the great world were not, according to the gossip of contemporary scandal-mongers, behindhand in bestowing their favours upon the idol of the moment.

The King lost no time in employing the remarkable talents of his new painter, and during the first three months in England Vandyck painted the fine portrait group of the King with the young Prince of Wales standing by his side and the Queen holding the infant Princess Mary in her arms (a picture now in the Vandyck Room at Windsor), besides a full-length portrait of the King and a half-length of the Queen, of which mention is made under

a Privy Seal warrant of the 8th of August, 1632. A copy of this warrant appears in Mr. William Hookham Carpenter's interesting memoir of Sir Anthony Vandyck.

Thus opened the most successful period of the great Flemish painter's career. Everything was favourable to the development of the fine arts. The King himself was gifted with an unusual taste and discrimination in artistic matters, and was, moreover, especially interested in painting, and, the fashion thus set, a wave of artistic enthusiasm passed over the country. Vandyck found himself overwhelmed with orders and commissions, and though portrait-painting was paid at what now appears an infinitesimal rate, the rapidity of his execution made it possible for the fashionable painter to set up an establishment and to live *en grand seigneur* within a very short time of his arrival upon the hospitable shores of the Thames. From this time onward he seems always to have worked with an almost feverish rapidity, and it is only his extraordinary skill and rapidity which makes possible the *bona fides* of the large number of canvases attributed to him. Smith in his *Catalogue Raisonné* attributes no fewer than eight hundred and forty-four pictures to Vandyck, but protects himself



CHARLES I AND HENRIETTA MARIA

by remarking that "possessors of duplicate pictures may reasonably suspect that they are in most instances the work of a scholar or an assistant, and may esteem themselves fortunate if they were done under the eye of the master and retouched by his hand."

It is calculated that during the greater part of his artistic career in this country he painted at the rate of three and four portraits a week (with the help, of course, of skilled assistants), and as he was paid at the rate of £60 for a full-length and £40 for a half-length or bust, he managed to make an income almost sufficient for his princely manner of living, and it is roughly estimated that he made during the most successful period of his career an income of something like £20,000 a year. His establishment was as elaborately conducted as those of the peers of the realm. He kept horses, carriages, and a retinue of servants, as well as musicians, singers, and professional jesters for the amusement of his sitters, so that his house became a favourite rendezvous for the fashionable men and women of the time. During meals, which were served to his sitters and any other visitors who happened to be present (for Vandyck kept open house), the painter and host studied their physiognomy, movements,

and attitudes, and made himself familiar with all their peculiarities, so that he was able to make of his sitters not only formal portraits, but striking likenesses.

The actual introduction of Vandyck to the King seems to have been made by the former's very good friend, Sir Kenelm Digby, of whom Vandyck executed a very fine portrait, now in the Royal Collection at Windsor. During His Majesty's first visit to the painter he acquired two portraits, just completed, of the Archduchess Isabelle and Gaston Duc d'Orleans, for which he paid £25 apiece. Three other canvases, representing the Stadtholder of Holland, his wife and son, were probably bought at the same time by Charles, or very shortly after, as they figure in the same account as having been paid for at the rate of twenty guineas apiece. It was immediately after this purchase that the King gave Vandyck the commission to paint the portraits of himself and the Queen mentioned above.

Their Majesties seem to have been charmed with their portraits, and gave practical proof of their satisfaction by ordering several historical pieces from the brush of Vandyck, the names of which are mentioned by Bellori, but the pictures have themselves disappeared. They were

chiefly mythological subjects, but for the Queen the artist executed a replica, with slight variation, of his famous picture in which angels in the clouds play instruments of music while their companions dance before the little Saviour, the Holy Mother, and St. Joseph. He also painted a picture of Daniel Mytens, his erstwhile rival, who, in his mortification at Vandyck's success in London, had asked permission to return to his country. The picture itself has been lost, but as it was engraved by Paul Pontius, and formed part of the collection published by Van den Enden, opportunity is afforded us of seeing that the portrait was not only good technically, but sympathetic in treatment, as all those he painted of his brother professionals, from Snyders and Rubens onward, seem to have been. There appears never to have been in his disposition any pettiness of the kind which takes pleasure in the belittling of a rival, and even when his brother artists were grudging him his small successes during his earlier life, he never took the obvious revenge of showing the worst side of their character in his portraits of them, a thing which so expert a physiognomist and painter could have done easily enough.

Little more than a year after his arrival in England Vandyck, by an Act registered on

the 17th October, 1633, was assigned an annuity of £200. He was kept continually at work on portraits of the Royal Family, and of the King himself he painted no less than nineteen portraits, and seventeen of the Queen, to whom King Charles throughout his stormy life always remained devotedly attached. Of all the portraits of Charles I. perhaps the most famous is the one now at Windsor, in which the King is depicted on horseback and riding through an archway, and of which further details will be given in the chapter devoted to the magnificent collection in the Vandyck Room at Windsor Castle. Excellent as the picture is technically, it is in the expression that the painter has chiefly excelled. The constitutional melancholy of the Martyr King seems to cast a gloom over his countenance and to be expressed in his every feature. One could almost suppose that Vandyck had a foreboding of the fate which was to overtake his royal master, for a similar expression of sadness and mysterious gloom is a characteristic of all his portraits of King Charles.

The fine portrait of Charles I. now in the Louvre, in which the monarch is shown dismounted, with his horse behind him, in a glade with a view of the sea in the distance, is a



LE ROI A LA CHASSE

(Louvre)

valuable instance of Vandyck's latest method. The figure of the King stands out, lonely and gloomy, amid the darkening shadows, for although he is attended by two pages, the painter has so subordinated all the etceteras that the spectator seems to see nothing at the first glance but the King. The horse, the pages, the trees which form the immediate background, seem hardly detachable from each other—a fault of perspective not often perpetrated by the master, but which may have been done on purpose, and which has, at any rate, effected its aim, if that aim were to throw into strong relief the graceful figure of Charles I. against the dark and almost threatening background.

In his portraits of Queen Henrietta Maria, Vandyck does not seem to the casual observer to have been so successful as he was both with the King himself and with the children of the royal couple. The explanation may be that the undoubted charms of the Queen lay more in her conversation, her vivacity, and varying facial expression, than in feature, and so she made, so to speak, a bad subject, which, for a queen, might perhaps not be an unexpected contingency. Her features, judging from the pictures, were regular, but somewhat heavy,

and probably needed the enlivening influence of conversation to raise them above the commonplace, from an artistic point of view. At any rate, whatever the cause, the painter does not seem to have extended the same idealisation to his portraits of her as might have been expected from the Official Painter to the Court. An exception to the above criticism must, however, be made in favour of the charming three-quarter length portrait of the Queen which hangs in the Vandyck Room at Windsor, and which has a gentle grace and charm not found in the more stately and formal portraits of her by the same artist. The queen is subordinated to the woman, and the insignia of rank, so frequently seen in her other portraits, are absent.

CHAPTER X

MANY ENGLISH PORTRAITS

Portrayer of children—Saved by red-tape—Some charming child-pictures—Flemish *versus* Italian influences—Vandyck's patrons—His striking allegory of Venetia Digby—He does few religious paintings in England—His dramatic portrait of Strafford.

IT was in England that Vandyck made his reputation as a portrayer of children, and for this, too, he was in a sense indebted to Charles I., who, devoted to his wife and family, gave the Court Painter ample opportunity for depicting the royal children at every age and in every guise. The young Duke of Buckingham and his brother, the sons of the assassinated favourite, were also painted by Vandyck, and their portraits in one canvas is one of the finest in the magnificent collection at Windsor Castle.

Yet, curiously enough, though there are innumerable portraits of the royal children in this country, both in the royal collections and

in private hands, one of the very finest pictures which Vandyck ever painted of the family of his royal patron is now in the Museum at Turin. There are several very similar pictures at Windsor and at Dresden, but the palm for harmony of composition and charm must be given to the Italian canvas. In it the three children stand out against a green curtain, drawn aside to discover a view of a garden. The little Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II., dressed in the usual cavalier costume of the period, lays his right hand on the head of a magnificent liver-coloured spaniel, which is painted in a manner worthy of Snyder himself. The little Princess Marie is in a dainty little white dress, and the baby Duke of York, elevated on a step to prevent his looking too small for the harmony of the picture, is in blue. This picture, which is in the best style of the famous painter, was originally in the Royal Collection of Charles I., and was sold after his death, together with various art treasures, many of which found their way to Spain. Fortunately many of the paintings of Vandyck originally in the Royal Collection were either not sold, owing to the slowness of the official red-tapeism, or were bought back again at the restoration of the Monarchy; and for this



THREE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I

(Turin)

reason the greater part of his work done in England still remains in this country, though the Prado Museum has a collection of his pictures, painted in Flanders and in England, which runs many of our collections very close, while the Hermitage at St. Petersburg is now the home of the famous Houghton Collection.

Another charming portrait of Charles II. as a child is in private hands in Paris. In this canvas the little Prince, only six years old at the time, is represented standing by a table, upon which his hat is laid. The little figure is dressed entirely in red with a miniature sword, and a pair of gloves in his left hand. This picture, from the age of the Prince, must have been painted in 1636.

The various portraits of the children of Charles I. now in the Vandyck Room at Windsor will be described fully in the chapter devoted to that collection, but there are several replicas of their portraits, one especially at Dresden, which is considered almost as fine as the best of those at Windsor, and is certainly from the brush of Vandyck himself, or at any rate "gone over" by him after it had left his assistant's hands.

At Amsterdam is a portrait painted at the end of Vandyck's life of the little Princess

Mary on her marriage at eight years of age to a husband of fourteen, William, Prince of Orange. The picture was painted in London, and shows the two children formally dressed as if for the important occasion. The little bride, whose left hand is held by her boy-husband, is in the costume of the period, with strings of pearls in her hair, and a rope of the same jewels round her neck. A lace collar covers the upper part of her dress, which is white, faintly brocaded with pale green. The Prince wears a picturesque and harmonious suit and mantle of wine-coloured silk, and in his left hand he holds his cavalier hat encircled with a cord of pearls. It is one of the most sympathetic and charming canvases in the Museum at Amsterdam. Colour, drawing, and the arrangement of light and shade, are all harmonious, and the figures themselves are dainty and attractive. All the charm of childhood is there, and the dignity and gravity which befitted the occasion is quaintly shadowed on the little faces. The fate of the child-bride and bridegroom in after years was very sad. The boy-husband died at the age of twenty-four, and the Princess, left a widow at sixteen years of age, had already previously had the tragic experience of know-



WILLIAM OF ORANGE WITH PRINCESS MARY

ing her father beheaded and her family in exile.

Second only to the King in importance as a patron and arbiter of the destiny of Vandyck were Lord Arundel and Sir Kenelm Digby. Of the latter a very fine portrait hangs at Windsor, and of Lord Arundel there are many representations from the brush of Vandyck. There are several pictures of him at Arundel and of his wife and son, and there is also a fine portrait of him at Stafford House, for which Vandyck's Italian tendencies were evidently revived at the instance of his sitter, who, like the King, had a passion for the sun-kissed warmth of the Italian school, and always preferred it to the painter's more natural style, in which his lights are less golden and his shades less warm in tone, the whole composition having the cool silvery tones characteristic of the Flemish school. The Earl of Arundel appears from contemporary descriptions of him and the portraits extant to have been tall and distinguished in appearance, dark in complexion, and with a thoughtful and intelligent brow. Both he and his wife, in addition to their artistic leanings, had a passion for travel, and they were, for that age, exceedingly travelled people, and it was during one of their visits to Italy that they

first came in contact with the famous Flemish painters, Rubens and Vandyck. It is this same Thomas, Earl of Arundel, who finds a place in Edmund Lodge's *Hundred and Fifty Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain*, and his biography is illustrated with a portrait engraved from Rubens' portrait of him.

Sir Kenelm Digby seems to have been a sort of Admirable Crichton in the society of the day. He was a courtier, a scholar, and a philosopher, and one of the most interesting personalities of the reigns of James I. and Charles I. He had been Ambassador to Spain during the reign of James I., and Charles made him a Gentleman-in-Waiting, and overwhelmed him with favours. He is described as handsome, though his portraits do not make him appear so, and it was probably more a fine presence and courtly manners which earned him this reputation. He was intelligent and tactful, and of good birth, though his father had suffered execution for his share in the Gunpowder Plot, a fact which might have rendered the position of anyone less popular extremely uncomfortable. Moreover, to his general social talents he added great personal courage and strength, and the marked favour shown him by



SIR KENELM DIGBY

the King made his position sufficiently secure even from the innuendoes of his enemies. That he was one of Vandyck's most intimate friends and best patrons is, however, more likely to arouse the interest of posterity than any other of his claims to fame. He had, moreover, a beautiful wife, to whom, according to rumour, the painter became much attached. The Lady Venetia Digby, to give her the title usually accorded in those days to women of distinguished lineage, was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Edward Stanley, by the daughter of the seventh Earl of Northumberland. The beautiful Venetia Digby seems to have been somewhat indiscreet, for Lord Clarendon speaks of her as "though of extraordinary beauty, of extraordinary fame." At any rate the scandalous stories seem to have been sufficiently definite to warrant a semi-refutation, and Vandyck painted her in an allegorical picture as Prudence surrounded by doves, the emblem of Purity, while the serpent of Calumny encircles her arm, powerless to injure her. Hatred and Envy are bound like slaves to the block of marble upon which the goddess stands, and Cupid sings her praises.

Vandyck himself was so pleased with this composition that he made a smaller copy for

himself with some of the details omitted, and it is this second canvas which now adorns the walls at Windsor. It is much simpler in composition than the original, which has disappeared. Lady Digby died suddenly, while still a very young woman, and Vandyck painted her on her death-bed with a faded rose by her side, the emblem of her own grace and fragile existence. Doubts have been raised as to whether Lady Digby was not the victim of marital jealousy through the medium of those subtle and mysterious poisons which were known to have been imported to England from Italy.

A portrait of Sir Kenelm Digby was painted for the *Iconographie* and engraved by Van Voerst, and a family group of Sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons is at Sherborne.

It was at the instance of Sir Horace Walpole, another connoisseur and patron of art in England, that Vandyck painted about this time a certain number of religious pictures. A "Saviour taken down from the Cross," "St. John the Baptist in the Desert," "St. Madeline and the Angels," "Judith and Holofernes," and "The Last Sigh of Christ." The proportion of religious canvases as compared to portraits painted during Vandyck's English

period was very small, for whereas in Flanders most of the money was in the hands of the ecclesiastical party, in England the wealth of the country was among the great nobles, whose desire to be perpetuated on canvas with their families was evidently greater than their religious enthusiasm, besides which the idea of pictures in churches, a form of art much affected in Roman Catholic countries, was not looked upon with favour in Protestant England. In painting, as in other things, the principle of demand and supply controls the picture market, so that it is only natural that while in Flanders Vandyck was famous chiefly for his religious pieces, in England he was little known save as a portrait-painter.

Besides Walpole, Sir Kenelm Digby, and Lord Arundel, there were several other prominent men much connected with Vandyck's artistic career, and among them the Earl of Northumberland and Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who afterwards suffered on the scaffold for his devotion to the interests of Charles I. Vandyck painted many portraits of the great Minister, and these are to be found scattered throughout the country, at Strafford House, Petworth, and one at the Duke of Grafton's in armour, a particularly vigorous

and masterly production. There are eight authentic portraits known of Strafford, one of the most famous being that which depicts him with his secretary, Sir Philip Mainwaring, and belongs to the famous collection of Lord Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Woodhouse. It represents the Minister seated in an armchair near a table, at which his secretary is preparing to write. Strafford looks straight before him, with an expression in which surprise, disbelief, and resolution are curiously mingled. He seems absorbed in reflection, and his secretary, pen in hand, looks towards him with an expression of consternation. The subject of the picture is now generally supposed to be the moment when Strafford prepares to dictate the heroic letter in which he begs his vacillating royal master to sign the death warrant demanded by the Commons and save himself at the expense of his faithful servant. This interesting canvas, which must have belonged to the last period of Vandyck's work, has been three times engraved—by Houston, by Vertue, and by Pierre de Jode.

Lord Northumberland, another great admirer of the Flemish master, seems to have also given the painter many commissions, and many of the portraits still adorn the walls of



LORD STRAFFORD AND HIS SECRETARY

(Wentworth Woodhouse)

the family seat of Petworth, as well as a "Saviour on the Cross," one of the most important religious works painted by Vandyck in England.

CHAPTER XI

VANDYCK AND REMBRANDT

A journey to Antwerp—Made Dean of the Society of St. Luke—Commanded to Brussels—Painting princes—Another allegory—Jean de Reyn—The state entry of the Cardinal-Infant—Vandyck and the bishop—The Rembrandt school—Vandyck masters Rembrandt's method—The two painters compared—The National Gallery examples of Vandyck and Rembrandt.

IN the month of September, 1634, Vandyck left England for his native country, in order to regulate various business matters in connection with a small property, and to supervise the series of engravings which Van den Enden was publishing for him in Antwerp.

He was very warmly received in his native town, where he was made Dean or Master of the Society of St. Luke, a guild of painters which had hitherto, probably from reasons of jealousy, withheld that honour from its most distinguished member. The contrast between his reception by his fellow-citizens on this occasion and that accorded him on his return

from Italy must have afforded Vandyck a good deal of amused disgust. Then, in spite of his undoubted talent, he had been received coldly, almost ignored, but now that the world smiled upon him, that he was a Court Painter, rich and titled, there were plenty of people to applaud his talent and to do him honour. There is no doubt, however, that long-deferred as it was, he appreciated the honour, for he was always much attached to the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp, and the Artists' Society which he formed in London was very similar to the old Flemish institution. All the Flemings settled in England, as well as his pupils and assistants, were admitted, and the meetings were held in the old Rose Tavern in Fleet Street.

Among the private and personal reasons which have been adduced for this visit to Antwerp by the gossipy historians of the times was the possible illness or even death of the mother of his illegitimate daughter, about whose future his will shows him to have been most solicitous. Certainly the mother died before Vandyck, as the child was left by this will to the guardianship of one of the artist's sisters, and there seems every reason to suppose that it was a matter connected either with

his mistress or his daughter which prompted his visit to Belgium at a moment when he was overwhelmed with work in England. Nor was he allowed to rest in Belgium, for it was during this visit that he was commanded to Brussels to paint various distinguished persons, and his position as a leading artist was then officially acknowledged. In October, less than a month after his arrival in Flanders, he was engaged upon the portrait of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, and his wife, as well as that of Princess Henrietta of Lorraine. He then received a commission to paint Prince Thomas of Savoy, Prince of Carignan, who had been Governor of the Netherlands between the death of the Duc d'Aytona and the arrival of the Cardinal-Infant to take up the appointment. Several replicas of this portrait exist, one at Berlin and one at Windsor, but the finest portrait of this Prince is the equestrian one at Turin already described.

In the suite of the Duchess of Orleans was the *Princesse de Cante-Croix* or *Cante-Croy*, who appears to have been a lady of extraordinary beauty, and who was portrayed by the famous Flemish artist at the same time as her royal mistress. This portrait, curiously enough, is now in the Windsor Collection, and



PRINCESSE DE CANTE-CROIX

(Windsor)

is one of the most attractive of Vandyck's female portraits. The story of the beautiful Princess is sufficiently romantic to account for the universal interest which seems to have been taken in her, quite apart from the beauty and dignity for which she was famous. Left a widow very young, she inspired the fourth Duke of Lorraine with a violent passion, and he having meanwhile grown tired of his wife, proceeded to repudiate her on the pretext of near kinship, and married the beautiful widow, whose position became an extremely delicate and difficult one, since neither the Pope nor society at large gave their approval to the marriage. Her chief punishment for the indiscretion, however, came later, when the fickle Duke found means of again disencumbering himself of his wife, and sought consolation in the arms of yet another lady.

These portraits are now scattered in the various galleries of Europe: that of Margaret of Lorraine is at Florence, and the portrait of the Prince of Carignano has already been mentioned as one of the masterpieces in the Museum at Turin. The last-named was at this time Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish troops in the Low Countries, and besides the large picture of him mounted on his charger,

Vandyck also executed another, now at Windsor, which was engraved by Paul Pontius. In this picture, a three-quarter-length portrait, the Prince is represented in armour, with his helmet on a table beside him, and holding in his right hand a field-marshal's baton. A huge lace collar covers the upper part of his cuirass, and in the background are the usual sombre draperies. It is executed in Vandyck's Italian manner, and shows the influence of Titian.

The new Governor, a brother of Philip IV. of Spain, and known as the Cardinal-Infant, arrived in Brussels on November 4th, and immediately upon his arrival Vandyck was "commanded" to paint a portrait of the new Governor, a picture now in the splendid Madrid Collection. Shortly afterwards, in a letter dated December 16th, the Town Clerk of Antwerp writes to the deputies of the town of Brussels asking for a copy of the Cardinal's portrait to be used in the decorations which were being prepared for the visit of the Governor to that town. Vandyck complied with the request of his townsmen, only to be asked for a portrait of the Infanta Isabella as a pendant, a request which annoyed him so much that he put a very high price upon this last commission. This the Antwerp authorities stigma-

tised as "excessive," and contented themselves with the copy of another portrait of the lady in question.

According to Weyerman, it was during his stay in Brussels in 1634 that he also painted the Assembly of Magistrates, a large composition of twenty-three figures, which was destroyed by fire in 1695. The picture was intended for the Town Hall, and represented the Council of the Syndics of the city. Although the picture no longer exists, we have the opinion of the not too facile critics of the period, who praise the perfect resemblance of the figures to the people they represented, the skilful arrangement of the groups, and the ingenious fashion in which the artist contrived to blend allegory and reality. A bistre sketch in the collection of M. Armand gives a very good idea of what one of the panels of the great picture was like. The centre is occupied by a blindfolded presentment of the Goddess of Justice seated on a sort of throne, and grouped around her, three on one side and four on the other, are members of the magistracy in the voluminous cloaks and outstanding ruffs then worn. The background is formed by columns and the usual heavy draperies. This important work must have required all the genius of

Vandyck's art to elevate it above the commonplace, for the dress of the period in the class he was depicting was not only sombre, but so lacking in variety as to be almost a uniform, and the faces of his sitters were of the prosperous bourgeois type, which does not lend itself easily to artistic treatment.

The portrait of the Archduke Ferdinand, now at Madrid, belongs to this period, and depicts him three-quarter length, dressed in armour, and carrying his military baton. Two portraits of Gaspard de Crayer, a personal friend of Vandyck's, and a most industrious and facile painter, are attributed to this period, one of which has been lost, while the other is in a private collection in this country. Several sacred pieces—among them the "Adoration of the Shepherds," painted for the church of Notre Dame at Termonde, in which the carpenter of Bethlehem salutes the angels who descend towards the Infant Christ, while the Virgin in conventional draperies holds the Child upon her knees—date from this visit; but in the opinion of connoisseurs, the work is not entirely from the hand of Vandyck, and may have been partially the handiwork of Jean de Reyn, his favourite pupil and assistant, who accompanied him from England. This de

Reyn seems to have followed the fortunes of his master for many years, and to have left Antwerp for London with Vandyck. His talent seems to have been so superior to that of the other pupils and assistants that he was always chosen to accompany the famous portrait-painter when he visited the great houses in England for the purpose of depicting the families of the great feudal lords. The Earls of Dorset, Carlisle, and Lindsay, all have examples of de Reyn's work, and there is a portrait in the Museum at Brussels attributed to him. After the death of Vandyck Jean de Reyn left England, where the Civil War was raging, and after a visit to Paris settled down at Dunkerque, where he died in 1678.

To this period also perhaps belongs the portrait of the Abbé Scaglia, who had ordered the "Christ Mourned by Angels" for the church of the Franciscans, and which now hangs in the Gallery at Antwerp. This is the view taken by the anonymous author of the Louvre manuscript, who is generally sufficiently well informed to be taken as a guide when definite evidence of dates fails. Among the other work upon which the artist was employed was the direction of the elaborate scheme of decoration entrusted to Rubens for

the state entry of the Cardinal-Infant. The older artist had the designing of the arches and triumphal cars, and no doubt his favourite pupil and friend took some of the work off the shoulders of his former master, for up to the last, in spite of unfounded reports to the contrary, the relations between the two great artists was of the most cordial nature.

An amusing episode in the life of the great painter, and one which affords us one of the few sidelights upon his character, may here be related, though it probably belongs to an earlier period of his career. Unlike his father, who lived and died, so to speak, in the shadow of the Church and under the influence of the priests, Vandyck seems always to have shown a spirit of independence in this respect, and to have resented the assumption of authority by the aristocracy of the Church, in spite of the fact that the attitude was a dangerous one at that time in Flanders, where the rule of the Church was a priestly despotism. The anecdote runs as follows :—

A certain Bishop asked the artist to come and paint his portrait. The ecclesiastic was of a size so colossal that he was usually chosen to take the part of St. Christopher in the celebrated procession at Antwerp, whereas

Vandyck was certainly greater intellectually than he was physically. The artist sent all his painting materials to the Bishop's palace, and then presented himself, his paint-boxes, etc., remaining meanwhile in the antechamber where the porter had placed them. The Bishop received the painter without rising from his comfortable armchair, and merely acknowledged Vandyck's greeting with an inclination of his head, a patronising form of salute which did not please the painter, who, however, said nothing, and awaited the termination of this farce. The priest stared at the painter with an irritating air of holy benevolence, forgetting he was not in this case a shepherd in the presence of his flock of faithful souls; but the painter did not flinch, and returned stare for stare. At last the patience of the prelate was exhausted, and he said brusquely, "Have you not come to paint my portrait?" Vandyck took a chair, and replied, "I am at your Eminence's service." The Bishop waited. Vandyck did not move. At last, "Why don't you fetch your materials? Do you think I am going to get them?" "Since," replied the painter, "you did not order your servants to bring them, I thought you wished to do me this service." The Bishop became crimson, and, rushing

out of his chair, shouted angrily, "Antoine, Antoine, you are only a little asp, but you are a very venomous one!" Before replying Vandyck backed towards the door, lest he should be crushed by the onslaught of the Colossus. Then "X——, X——, you are a very large person, but you are like a cinnamon tree—the outer shell is the only thing good you have about you."

Just about this time Rembrandt was rising into fame, and Vandyck studied his methods and mastered them most successfully, as may be seen in his portrait of Cornelis von der Gheest. This canvas shows a man of about sixty years of age, and has the golden tone in the lights peculiar to Rembrandt, the same depth and warmth in the shadows, the same softness and sombre richness of colour. In no respect was Vandyck at a disadvantage with the founder of the new school, as may be seen by a comparison of his masterpiece with the fine Rembrandts which hang side by side with it in the National Gallery in London.

CHAPTER XII

HIS LAST ENGLISH PERIOD

In England again—Marvellous rapidity of work—Decadence—His apology—Dress of the period—His many assistants—His carnations lose their exquisite delicacy—Vandyck rich—King Charles's children—Sir Endymion Porter—His pictures rarely signed or dated—Differences between his earlier and his later works—Religious and imaginative paintings of Vandyck's later years.

IN 1635 Vandyck again returned to England and took up his strenuous life of work and pleasure. His studio became again a centre of gaiety and luxury, a condition of things vividly illustrated in Madou's *Scenes from the Lives of the Flemish Painters*, where an engraving of the interior of Vandyck's studio gives rather the impression of a fashionable lady's reception-room than the scene of a painter's labours. At this time Vandyck was working with a feverish activity and a rapidity almost miraculous. His pictures kept a crowd of engravers always busy, for the painter had for some time past grasped the fact that one of

the short roads to artistic fame is to have works presented to the public through the medium of an engraving. But already his canvases began to show signs of that decadence which marked so much of his work during the latter years of his life. He himself was by no means blind to this fact, and when reproached with the inferiority of his later productions as compared with some of his earlier work, he replied, "I know, and no wonder, for whereas formerly I worked for my reputation, now I work for my fortune." The simplicity of the fashions at that time were also in his favour, and contributed to no small extent to the ease with which the painter was able to make a great effect with a minimum of labour. It was easy to subordinate the dress to the face of the subject, and while diminishing the labour, the work gained in dignity from the simplicity of the accessories. A doublet; a short mantle, tight-fitting breeches, a pleated ruff or a turned-down collar, comprised the civil costume, and the dress of the women was equally simple. A plainly cut gown of silk or satin, with full sleeves, a bodice trimmed with pearls or precious stones, and a collar with or without a border of lace, was the costume worn with but little variation by practically every

woman of a certain rank in society. The men wore their hair short, and the women dressed theirs simply, with flat curls on the forehead, but neither sex had yet begun the use of powder, nor had the extravagant fashions, which became the mode after the Restoration, yet appeared.

In de Piles' account of Vandyck's methods of painting the writer draws special attention to the sketches in black and white crayons on grey paper which the artist made of his sitters for the guidance of his assistants, who then drew the portraits on canvas, and painted the clothes from the actual garments of the sitters, thus leaving only the finishing touches to Vandyck himself. Of the accuracy of this statement by de Piles there is positive proof. The British Museum and the collection of the Duke of Devonshire contain many a sheet of grey paper on which, with a few rapid strokes of black and white crayon, the main outlines of the figure and pose are suggested. These are undoubtedly the first outlines drawn by the master for the guidance of the pupil, who laid the first coat of paint on the canvas. These sketches are hardly to be found anywhere except in England, which seems to prove that it was only towards the end of his career that Vandyck

resorted to this method. The system, though of course making for rapidity of execution in a remarkable degree, had many disadvantages, chief among which was the fact that the hands and accessories were not always in accord with the physique of the sitter. Nor did Vandyck take the trouble to preserve the purity of his colour. His carnations lost their exquisite delicacy, as a consequence of this haste to make a fortune, and instead of their being modelled in grey tones and delicately graduated, they began to pass without transition from white to red. It was by this prostitution of his art, and the sacrifice of the charm and delicacy of his qualities as a colourist, that Vandyck realised his early ambition, and having become famous, now became also rich, and was able to live in the luxury which he loved.

But at this time he had not yet sacrificed everything to the exigencies of an expensive mode of living. He was still in his prime in 1635, since it was then that he painted the masterpiece at Turin of the children of Charles I. and the magnificent portrait of the two sons of the Duke of Buckingham at Windsor. The year following his return to this country seems to have been a very busy one for the Court Painter, for in addition to the portraits



LUCY COUNTESS OF CARLISLE

(Windsor)

painted of the King and of Henrietta Maria, he painted a great many people more or less connected with the Court, among them Rachel, Countess of Southampton, Francis, fourth Duke of Bedford, Philip, fourth Earl of Pembroke, Margaret Smith, a lady famous for her beauty, besides a number of less illustrious people.

Either in 1635 or the year following Vandyck painted the portrait of Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, which hangs at Windsor. Lady Carlisle had a reputation for striking beauty, which hardly seems to be borne out by this portrait of her, though the treatment is charming and sympathetic. The canvas depicting the five children of Charles I., also at Windsor, and of which there is an inferior replica at Berlin, the half-length portrait of the King, now at Warwick Castle, and a portrait of Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, are also to be attributed roughly to the same period; while to 1638 is due the portrait of Archbishop Laud, the Duke of Newcastle's portrait of the poet, Sir Thomas Killigrew, and the double portrait at Windsor of Killigrew and Thomas Carew. Two portraits of the King and the Queen respectively belong to this date, and were engraved by Van Gunst.

At the Museum of the Brera at Milan is one of Vandyck's interesting portraits of women painted about this period. It represents a young widow dressed, of course, in black, relieved only by the inevitable collarette and rows of pearls. But the execution of this portrait leaves nothing to be desired, and there are none of the signs of haste which were an unfortunate characteristic of Vandyck's last period, when the extravagances of his life forced him to undertake more work than he could reasonably hope to do to his own artistic satisfaction. The family picture of the Pembrokes at Wilton, and the charming portrait of Philip, Earl of Pembroke, which is now in the possession of Lord Verulam, belong also to this period of the artist's career. In the Pembroke family picture the figures are fairly well grouped, though there seems rather a lack of unity, a want of method, in their relative positions on the canvas, and the picture seems to need the interest of a common action to bring the numerous figures into relation with one another. Besides Lord and Lady Pembroke and their five sons and married daughter, there is in this group an interesting portrait of Lady Mary Herbert, wife of a dead son of Lord Pembroke, afterwards Duchess of Richmond,

and daughter of the Duke of Buckingham, a lady painted more than once by the Flemish artist.

Sir Endymion Porter, a Gentleman-in-Waiting, and a great favourite with King Charles, was also an intimate personal friend of Vandyck's, and it is to this fact that we owe the magnificent double portrait of Sir Endymion Porter and the painter himself on the same canvas, which is one of the treasures of the Prado Collection at Madrid. In this picture Vandyck has presented his friend dressed completely in white satin and himself in black. Of the painter only his profile and one shoulder is seen, as the figure is half turned away from the spectator. The whole scheme, both of composition and colour, is extremely bold, and only justifiable by the success which attended so daring an artistic scheme. Lord Hardwicke possesses or possessed another portrait of Sir Endymion Porter, of which the pendant of Lady Porter belongs to Lady Egremont.

This magnificent portrait probably belongs to the early years of the painter's residence in England, and shows no sign of the faults which marked so much of his later work, though the fact that he so rarely signed or dated his pictures, of course, makes it merely a

matter of conjecture. In his last period Vandyck often obtained harmony of colour and form at the expense of strength and boldness—an accusation which certainly cannot be levelled against the Prado canvas just described—and in his fear of violent contrasts, he lost the true values of light and shade, and thus incidentally of perspective also. During the greater part of his life the painter had followed the example of his master Rubens, and treated both colour and form with a definiteness and precision of style, and his figures were thrown into judicious relief by his skilful management of his chiaroscuro. But towards the end of his career Vandyck seems either to have lost this quality or to have voluntarily abandoned it, and many of his works show a regrettable tendency to vagueness and obscurity, quite at variance with his early manner, though even at the last he sometimes reverted to the precision and definiteness which were his pre-eminent qualities, and produced work worthy of his great reputation.

The incessant work of portrait-painting left Vandyck little time for works of imagination, and it is, so to speak, in consequence of his success in one department that there was so lamentable a poverty in the other. Among the



VANDYCK AND ENDYMION PORTER

CHAPTER XIII

THE WINDSOR CASTLE VANDYCKS

Royal Vandycks unsatisfactorily hung—The finest picture in the Windsor Collection—A canvas breathing domestic happiness in a troubled reign—A guide to the sculptor becomes a masterpiece—A posthumous portrait of James I.—“St. Martin dividing his Cloak”: a brilliant example—Portraits of friends—The Prince of Carignan—A disputed Vandyck in the Rubens Room.

THE most notable collection of Vandyck's works rightly enough belongs to the Royal House of England, the country which recognised the talent of the great Fleming and loaded him with honours and favours, at a time when his own countrymen only grudgingly acknowledged his right to be ranked amongst the masters of his art. The pictures at Windsor are, however, closely rivalled by the Spanish National Collection at Madrid, and this last has the further inestimable advantage of being hung in worthy setting, and finds a home in the magnificent Prado Museum.

It is a matter for universal regret among the

art-lovers in this country that the Royal Collection of Vandyck's works at Windsor, including as it does some of the finest and most characteristic specimens of that master's work, should be displayed with such total disregard, not only of the convenience of the public, but of the laws which should govern the hanging and lighting of such masterpieces. The apartment in Windsor Castle, known as the Vandyck Room, containing as it does almost all the pictures by him at Windsor (the famous St. Martin now finding a place in the Rubens Room), is in every way unsuited for the exhibition of the pictures, which are so crowded together as to seriously detract from their individual effectiveness. A large proportion, too, of the canvases are almost invisible to the spectator, as they are hung right up into the corners, and the strong side-light makes it a matter of difficulty even to make out the subject. The greatest difficulty is placed in the way of critics or connoisseurs who wish to have special facilities for seeing the pictures without the intervention of the "silken barrier," or the too garrulous guide whose well-meant interpolations are a disturbing reminder of the fact that each visitor is only a unit in a personally conducted excursion party. It is to be

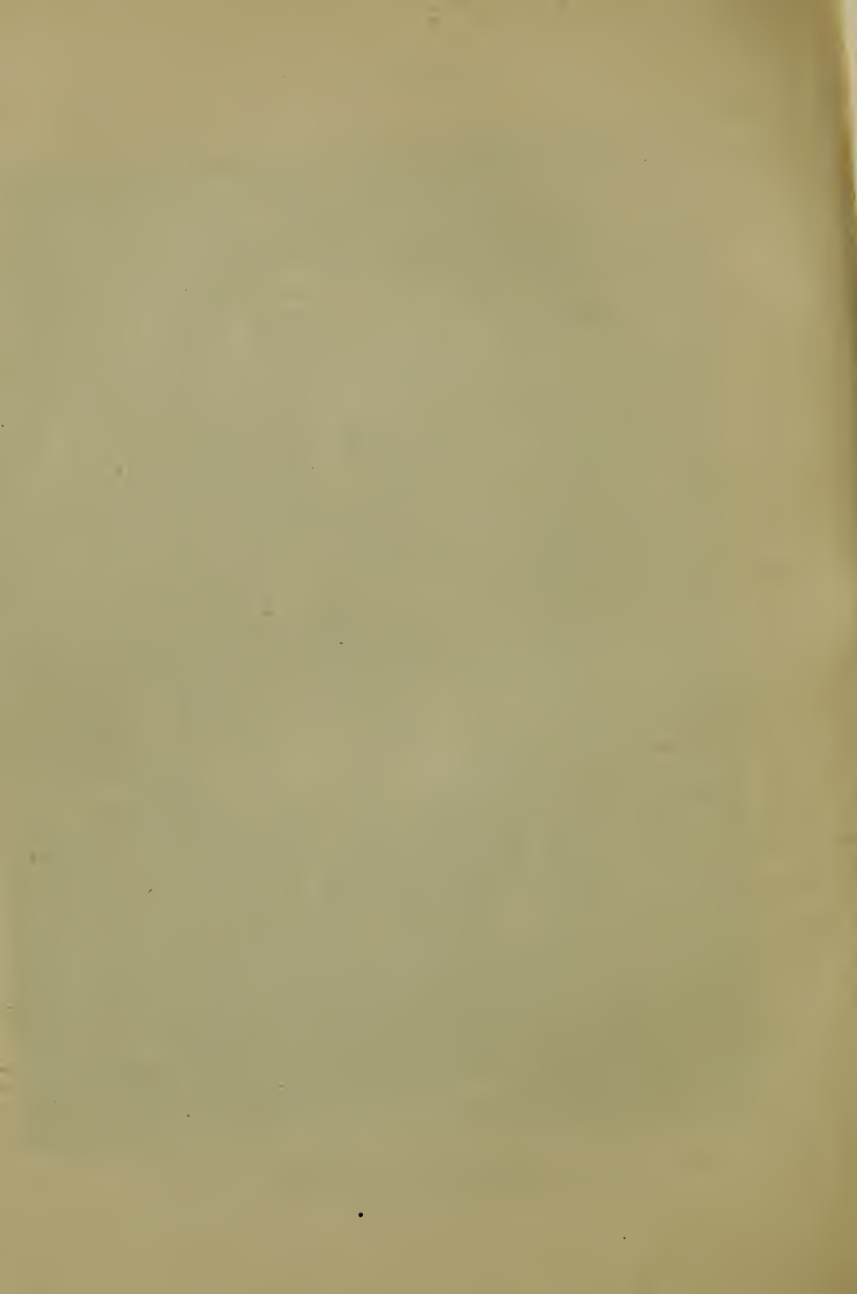
hoped that the state of things which gives the art-loving public only the most fleeting glimpse of these masterpieces under the most unfavourable conditions may soon be remedied, and the pictures placed amidst such conditions of space, light, etc., as may reveal their beauties fully, instead of concealing them, as is at present the case.

Incomparably the finest picture in the collection at Windsor is the equestrian portrait of Charles I., though as regards technique the St. Martin, a replica, with slight variations, of the famous Saventhem canvas, runs it very close. In addition to the excellence of the picture from a technical point of view, this is certainly the finest and most dignified of Vandyck's portraits of King Charles, without excepting the equestrian portrait of His Majesty in the National Gallery, to which the Windsor canvas is certainly superior, especially in the matter of chiaroscuro. The idea of kingly dignity, the impression of temporal power and majesty, is most effectively conveyed in this magnificent picture. The King sits his splendidly caparisoned charger with an attitude of authority, with an expression of ease and command both of himself and the world which could hardly be excelled, and the conception of the artist in de-



CHARLES I ON HORSEBACK

(Windsor)



picting the majestic figure advancing through a lofty gateway, like an ancient warrior returning triumphant from some great military achievement, is particularly happy both in its typical sense and in its technical results. Yet with all the warlike accoutrements the spectator can never lose sight of the sense of foreboding, of melancholy prescience, which penetrates the stately mask of the foredoomed monarch. The King advances out of the picture almost facing the spectator, with only a slight turn to the right, and his right hand grasps the marshal's baton, of which the end is fixed on the housings of his embroidered saddle. The bridle and stirrup leathers are of scarlet and gold, and the whole effect of colour is rich but subdued. The pose both of the horse and figure are almost identical with those in the equestrian portrait of Francois de Moncade in the Louvre, a picture which was probably painted subsequently to the one of Charles I., perhaps during Vandyck's visit to his native land about 1635 or 1636. The equerry who attends His Majesty is slightly in advance of His Majesty and holds the King's helmet. He is dressed in a rich suit of crimson velvet. Round his neck he wears a broad collar and a wide dark ribbon with the star of some foreign

order. There are several replicas of this famous picture. One of slightly smaller dimensions than the original is now at Warwick Castle, and was formerly in the collection of Lord Waldegrave. Another is at Stapleford, and yet another still smaller than the Warwick version is at Apsley House, and was originally bought by the Duke of Wellington, who acquired it from his brother, the first Lord Cowley, who brought it from Spain where he was at one time Ambassador. Lord Carlisle, Lord Leconfield, and Lord Jersey, all have variants of this picture, and the original drawings made by Vandyck for both the horse and the whole composition are in the British Museum.

The large picture of Charles I. and his family forms the pendant to the equestrian portrait just described, and depicts the King and Queen seated, the former with his little son at his knee and Henrietta Maria with her infant daughter in her arms. The whole canvas breathes a peace and domestic happiness which, however troubled the political horizon, seems always to have been the fortunate condition of the royal household. There is little trace in this early portrait of the King, probably among the first painted by Vandyck of his royal patron, of

that mental anxiety and settled gloom which we see in most of the portraits of the monarch ; though the face is of the same poetic and somewhat melancholy type, it as yet bore no traces of the misfortunes which were to leave their impress upon his features a year or two later. In this canvas Charles and Henrietta Maria are shown in life-size, seated side by side in chairs of state, against a background of deep crimson draperies, classic columns, and on the left a distant panorama of the river Thames and Westminster. Both the royal consorts are bareheaded ; the King is dressed in a rich costume of blue silk, slashed with white, and edged with silver braid. His breeches are tied with light-coloured bows, his stockings and shoes are white, and over his left arm is the dark-blue mantle of the Garter embroidered with the star of the Order. The little Prince is in a long dress of dark-green material and wears a little white coif on his head. The Queen wears amber-coloured silk with a broad bertha of white lace caught at the breast with a rosette of blue velvet. A head-dress of pearls adorns her hair, and the same gems outline her throat and ornament her ears.

Midway between these two large canvases is that depicting the head of Charles I. in

three positions, a remarkably interesting portrait painted by Vandyck as a model for a bust of the King, which was executed by the Italian sculptor, Bernini. It seems curious that in making what was intended merely as a careful study for another man's work Vandyck should have painted the King in three different costumes for the three positions, and it is characteristic, perhaps, of his artistic temperament, that the picture instead of being merely a guide, became in itself a masterpiece. The full-face portrait of the King is dressed in red, with the Order of the Garter; the King in profile is in black, and the three-quarters view of the royal sitter shows him in a costume of pale pinkish lilac, with a cloak of the same colour, but slightly deeper in tone.

A portrait of King Charles in robes of state hangs in St. George's Hall at Windsor, and appears to be more or less a formal presentation of the Stuart monarch intended for the inclusion in the royal dynastic portrait-gallery. In this picture the King is depicted standing, full length, and directed slightly to the right. He is attired in a long tunic of purple velvet, bordered with ermine and gold, over which is a long cloak lined with miniver. His stockings and shoes are white, and the latter



CHARLES I (THREE POSITIONS)

(Windsor)

are ornamented with huge rosettes. A deep turned-over collar and ruffles of full lace, and the collar of the Garter with the "George" hanging from it, complete the costume. He stands in a sort of vestibule, with the usual amber curtain, the column and distant sky, against which, on a sort of ledge, the outline of the crown and orb are thrown up in vivid relief. The original sketch for the picture in the National Gallery, depicting the King on a dun-coloured horse, is also in the Royal Collection, but is at present, I believe, at Buckingham Palace, and not at Windsor.

Not content with the many portraits of himself, his wife, and his children, King Charles commissioned Vandyck to paint a posthumous portrait of his royal father, James I., whom the artist had of course seen during his first visit to England during that monarch's reign. The picture now in the Royal Collection was probably painted about 1632 from some already existing portrait by another artist, and the picture to which Vandyck probably owed most was that by Van Somer, which now hangs at Holyrood, and shows the first of the Jameses standing full length in black velvet and ruff, with the Order of the Garter. The Flemish artist's portrait of King James, however, was

markedly superior to the original, and is an extraordinarily vivid portrait, which is more than can be said of the somewhat colourless original.

In the room known as the Rubens Room is the before-mentioned "St. Martin Dividing his Cloak," which is one of the finest specimens of the Flemish master's art in the whole of the collection. The picture was formerly attributed to the great Peter Paul, though there is now little doubt that it is a brilliant and interesting example of Vandyck's work while still under the influence of his master, and almost certainly painted before his tour in Italy, as there is no trace of the Italian influences which mark the second period of his artistic career. The pale flesh tints and grey-blue transparent shadows show the same characteristics as do several portraits painted by Vandyck before his departure to Italy, such as the beautiful portrait of Snyders in Lord Carlisle's collection. The famous St. Martin at Saventhem, unquestionably the work of Vandyck, is a replica, though differing in several important particulars from the one at Windsor, and this would seem to corroborate the theory of Vandyck's authorship. St. Martin, in a shirt of polished armour, is seated on a grey Flemish mare; with his



ST. MARTIN DIVIDING HIS CLOAK

(Windsor)

right hand he holds the hilt of his sword, and with the left he is drawing his cloak at the point where the blade is severing it. In the background on the left is a man mounted on a chestnut horse, and on the right in the foreground are two beggars. The picture seems to have been given to Rubens by Vandyck, and remained in the former's studio till his death, when it was sold, and passed into Spain, where it was bought for Frederick, Prince of Wales, and eventually became the possession of the Crown.

In addition to the several portraits of Queen Henrietta Maria and the children of the ill-fated monarch, which will form the subject of a later chapter, there are several most interesting portraits in the Windsor Gallery, including those of a man named Snellincx, Sir Kenelm Digby, the Prince of Carignan, Count Henry de Berg, the famous double portrait of Thomas Killigrew and Carew, and the charming canvas of the young Duke of Buckingham and his brother, which affords yet another proof, if such were necessary, of Vandyck's unapproachable talent in the depicting of children.

The fine portrait of the painter's good friend and patron, Sir Kenelm Digby, shows the courtier in a sitting position, richly attired in an

amber-coloured costume of brocade, the almost inevitable mantle gathered on his right arm being of rich, deep purple velvet. The contemporary chroniclers all speak of Sir Kenelm as being a man of unusual physical attraction and personal fascination, which, together with his great personal courage and general social talents, combined to give him a unique position in the society of the time. In the Windsor picture his looks hardly bear out the description of handsome, and the fact of the portrait being a sitting one perhaps exaggerates the somewhat squat appearance of his figure, though his costume, both in detail and general effect, conveys an idea of richness and dignity. His face, though not refined or aristocratic in type, marks a strong individuality; his hair is long, but a slight moustache is the only hair on the face, which is somewhat round and fat.

The Snellinx, immortalised in the Windsor canvas, is evidently not the painter of that name who finds a niche in the famous *Iconographie*, but probably some friend of Vandyck's bearing the same name. The portrait, which is a half-length portrait of a man of middle age, is a very fine one. The sitter wears a dress of black silk with slashings of white and full ruffles of

pleated lawn at the neck and wrists. His bare left hand is on the hilt of his sword, and his right hand is gloved.

One of the most admirable of Vandyck's double portraits, and one worthy to be mentioned with the famous canvas in Madrid, which represents the artist himself with his friend Endymion Porter, is that known as "Killigrew and Carew," which occupies a place in the Windsor Gallery. The left-hand sitting figure is a portrait of Killigrew, formerly a page to King Charles, and who at the period the picture was painted was a fairly well-known dramatist. The other figure, who sits almost opposite with his back to the spectator and head slightly turned, has been for many years popularly supposed to be Thomas Carew, a contemporary poet, but there seems more probability that the figure represents one of Killigrew's four brothers, one of whom, Sir William Killigrew, was at one time Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to the King, and another, Henry, was also a dramatist. Killigrew is shown at half length, sitting and facing towards the right. He is dressed entirely in black, and his hair, which is very long and light in colour, falls over his shoulders. The other figure sits exactly opposite to Killigrew, and his dress is

almost identical with that of Killigrew. The composition of the picture is good, and the posing particularly happy. The figures seem to have a common subject of interest and discussion, and the right-hand figure seems to turn for corroboration of some remark to a third and unseen person present.

The portrait of Thomas of Savoy, Prince of Carignan, is a fine and lifelike picture of the warlike Prince, who was the subject of Vandyck's fine equestrian portrait in the Museum of Turin. In the Windsor picture the Prince is shown life-size, three-quarters length, wearing a suit of plate armour studded with rivets of gold. His face is turned nearly full to the front, the light coming in from the left. Round his neck is a broad collar of lace, and the conventional background is formed by an amber-coloured curtain. In the Royal Museum at Berlin is another and better version of this picture, which seems to have been repeated by the artist several times.

The large canvas representing the "Family of Sir Balthazar Gerbier," which has been variously ascribed to Rubens and Vandyck, now hangs in the Rubens Room at Windsor. It shows traces of the influence of both masters, but is probably the work of a copyist, who

utilised Rubens' original portrait of Madame Gerbier and her four children, and afterwards added the group on the right hand side of the picture.

CHAPTER XIV

VANDYCK'S COURT BEAUTIES

A favourite portrait—Twenty pounds for an exquisite painting of Queen Henrietta Maria—Fifteen pounds for a pair of portraits—The Stuart babes : a masterpiece of child-painting—A girl widow—A seeming incongruity—Margaret Lemon—Vandyck excels himself in the portrait of a beauty—Gaiety and coquetry depicted—Vandyck unnerved by a sitter's charms—Some religious pictures.

MANY of the great houses of England are adorned with portraits of Queen Henrietta Maria, but the features of the charming and sprightly French Princess are chiefly familiar through the many canvases in the royal collections which have her as their subject. In the Vandyck Room at Windsor alone there are five pictures of the wife of Charles I., who always kept the Court Painter busy with portraits of the Queen and the royal children, who form the subject of some of the artist's most attractive canvases.

The three-quarter-length portrait of "Henrietta Maria," which hangs in a prominent



QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA

(Windsor)

position just inside the Vandyck Room, was painted soon after the Flemish artist's final settlement in England, and dates probably as early as 1632. Painted in the heyday of her youth and beauty, it is quite natural that this portrait should be the favourite one with the King, and was the one selected by him to hang in his own bedroom. In it the Queen is shown in three-quarters, standing with both head and figure slightly turned towards the spectator, with the light falling nearly full in front. She is dressed entirely in white satin, her long bodice or tunic elaborately embroidered in silver and trimmed with fine cobwebby lace, while a bertha of falling lace covers her shoulders. Her left hand hangs down by her side, the fingers lightly clasping her dress. Her right hand is stretched out towards a table, on which lie some red roses and a beautiful jewelled crown. Her hair is elaborately arranged with pearls and a bow of red velvet, and round her neck is the usual string of large pearls. According to the records, in which a detailed account of the royal expenditure was kept, the modest sum of twenty pounds was all that Vandyck received for this picture, certainly one of the most sympathetic ever painted of the Queen.

Two smaller portraits of the royal sitter flank

the well-known canvas of the head of Charles I. in three positions, and were probably those painted for Bernini as a model for a bust of the Queen. One of the pictures is a bust full-face portrait, painted with a simplicity and directness which must have been invaluable to the sculptor, and the profile painted evidently as a companion picture is treated with the same uncompromising candour and lack of idealisation. For this pair of portraits Vandyck received fifteen pounds apiece, which seems an unusually small sum for him to receive. Perhaps his royal patron considered the pension the artist received as Court Painter a set-off to the somewhat meagre remuneration accorded him for royal commissions.

Of the many pictures which Vandyck painted of the children of Charles I., perhaps the most successful is the canvas which depicts the three elder ones when the little Prince of Wales was about five years old, and Princess Mary less than four. Both the elder children look a good deal older than their years, and have an air of dignity and gravity which seems unnatural to their tender age. The third figure in the picture is the second son of Charles I., afterwards Duke of York and James II., and represented as a charming babe occupying the



THREE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I

centre of the composition. He is dressed in long white robes, embroidered and edged with lace. This picture is perhaps one of the finest of Vandyck's portraits of children, and has only one serious rival in the portrait of the same children at Turin, but painted when they were even younger. The colouring is exquisitely delicate and silvery in tone, and the posing and expression are as nearly perfect as possible. The artist has portrayed with consummate art the grace and charm of childhood, at the same time presenting the dainty dimpled beauty of the merely physical aspect. The left and right of the canvas are occupied by Prince Charles and his sister, and at the feet of each is a little spaniel. There is a replica of this beautiful picture at Dresden which connoisseurs state to be undoubtedly the work of Vandyck himself, or at any rate "gone over" by his brush. Another version, but not so perfect, hangs in the Vandyck Room at Wilton, and forms part of Lord Pembroke's valuable collection.

There is another most interesting portrait of the little Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II., when only eight years old. The little cavalier is depicted in a full suit of armour, his right hand grasping a pistol, and his left

clasping a huge plumed helmet, which lies on the table beside him. The Prince is bare-headed, and his brown hair, which falls over his shoulders, is cut square across his forehead. The picture is by no means amongst the artist's best work, for though the subject is interesting and sympathetically treated, the technique shows signs of the deterioration which unfortunately marked much of his later work.

A still later picture, having as its subject the "Five Children of King Charles," was painted in 1637, and is by no means so harmonious in composition as the group of the three children mentioned above. A large dog occupies the foreground of the canvas, which seems to be divided into two separate groups. In the centre stands Prince Charles dressed in red satin with a wide lace collar and ruffles. Next to him on the right is the little Duke of York, in a dress of crimson satin and a white lace coif at the back of his head. Princess Mary on his right is in unrelieved white, and her demure little face is edged with dainty curls. On the other side of the picture, and somewhat detached from this group, is the Princess Elizabeth, holding the infant Princess Anne, who disports herself in a cupid-like attire, con-



DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND LORD FRANCIS VILLIERS

sisting of a scarf of loose semi-transparent drapery.

The double portrait of the little "Duke of Buckingham and his Brother" is quite one of the masterpieces at Windsor, and worthy to be ranked with the delightful canvas of Prince Rupert and his brother in the galleries of the Louvre. The two sons of the Duke of Buckingham were brought up at Court with the children of Charles I. as soon as they were of an age to leave the nursery, in accordance with a promise made to the Duchess after the assassination of the favourite. The two boys are shown in full-length standing figures, dressed in the picturesque fashion of the period, and the pair of little cavaliers show all the ease and grace of the full-blown courtier, combined with a charming air of youthful dignity and distinction. The little Duke is attired in a doublet and knee-breeches of red satin, the sleeves slashed with white. His brother, Lord Francis Villiers, who stands a little further back in the picture, is dressed in a similar costume, but of a dark amber colour, and his left hand is on the hilt of his sword. The boys are eight and six respectively. There is a copy of this fine picture both at Warwick Castle and Hampton Court.

A sister of the little Duke of Buckingham was also painted by the great Court Painter, and her portrait hangs near to those of her young brothers. Lady Mary Villiers, at the time of the Windsor portrait the wife of James Stuart, Duke of Lennox, and afterwards Duke of Richmond, had already been once painted by Vandyck in the family group of the Pembroke family, as she was married at eleven years of age to Lord Herbert, eldest son of the fourth Lord Pembroke. Her first husband died a few months after her marriage, and she appeared at Court in widow's weeds before she was in her teens. Soon afterwards, while still only fourteen, she married the King's cousin, James Stuart. In the Windsor canvas the young Duchess, richly dressed in a robe of white satin with a scarf of blue silk thrown over her right shoulder, is represented sitting in a sort of grotto, and her right hand rests on a lamb which lies on a ledge of rock beside her, while a branch of palm lies across her left shoulder. There seems no particular reason why the lady should have been depicted with the emblems of St. Agnes, and, moreover, her rich dress and beautiful jewels would be scarcely in character with the accepted idea of the simple and ascetic life of the saint she represented.



DUCHESS ST. CROIX

(Munich)

Of the several feminine portraits in the Royal Collection, the one to which the most romantic interest attaches is that of Margaret Lemon, who played so prominent a part in the life of the painter during the last years of his life, and for whom Vandyck conceived so violent a passion that he flung prudence to the winds, and openly established her in his house as his mistress. Of her physical charms we have ample proof, not only from the statements of contemporaries, but from the various canvases upon which Vandyck perpetuated the beauty to which he fell so complete a victim. The picture of Miss Lemon which hangs at Hampton Court Palace is a half-length figure dressed in loose crimson draperies, which she holds to her breast with both hands, in an attitude reminiscent of Titian's "Magdalen" in the Pitti Palace at Florence. Her beauty is of the rich, voluptuous type, and her large dark eyes, regular features, and full red lips, are treated not only with the sympathetic appreciation of the artist, but with the enthusiasm of the lover. Nevertheless, the picture of Miss Lemon does not inspire the onlooker with the same admiration as the portrait of the beautiful Princess de Cante-Croix, which hangs at Windsor, and in which Vandyck has excelled himself. The

graceful figure of the youthful Princess is depicted at full length, standing, and slightly turned to the left, though the face is turned towards the spectator. She is richly dressed in an under-dress and sleeves of white silk thickly embroidered in gold; over this is a sort of *manteau de cour* of black velvet with short slashed sleeves. She wears a necklace and bracelets of pearls, and her soft brown hair is becomingly dressed, and forms a background for her softly-rounded features and delicately oval face.

Another full-length portrait of one of the celebrated beauties of the period is that of the celebrated Countess of Carlisle, who stands in a graceful pose by a fountain in which she is dipping her hand, attired in a dress of bright yellowish-red silk, cut very low in front, and with the usual ruffles of lace on the bodice and sleeves. Her features are regular and attractive, and altogether it is a charming portrait, and has more gaiety and coquetry than is usual in the somewhat melancholy and dignified portraits which Vandyck made of the fair sex. The interesting allegorical picture in which Lady Venetia Digby is shown triumphant over the serpents of Calumny and Envy is one of the treasures of Windsor, and shows a refine-

ment of colour and delicacy of treatment which were characteristic of his earlier English manner. Lady Digby was immortalised by a contemporary poet, and extolled by the courtiers of Charles I. in the following couplet :—

“What travellers of matchless Venice say,
Is true of the admired Venetia.”

Her portrait hangs side by side with that of her husband, and is the smaller variant of the original picture painted by Vandyck for Sir Kenelm Digby. According to his various chroniclers, Sir Anthony was very susceptible to the charms of his fair sitters, and for Lady Digby he is popularly supposed to have had more than a mere professional admiration. Of one fair model he is said to have been so enamoured that, facile draughtsman though he was, her charms so unnerved him that her portrait had to be recommenced more than once—a little incident which is supposed to refer to the lady who afterwards married Lord Spencer, and became ultimately the Countess of Sunderland.

Of the religious pictures in the possession of the Royal Family, and which are distributed among the various royal palaces, the most important are a “Blessed Virgin and Child,” which recalls the “Vierge aux Donateurs” in

the Louvre ; the "Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine," a canvas belonging to the second Flemish period of the artist's career, and the "Christ Healing the Lame Man." In the last-named work the influence of the Venetian school is strongly marked, and it was probably painted in Belgium shortly after Vandyck's return from Italy. The composition consists of three half-length figures, with the heads of two others in the background on the left. The Saviour forms the central figure, and turns towards the lame man, who is on the left of the picture. The head of the Christ is the same as that in the "Saviour with the Cross" in the Brignole-Sala Gallery at Genoa.



THE MOCKING OF CHRIST

(Berlin)

CHAPTER XV

HIS MARRIAGE

A prey to the charlatans—Hard work tells upon him—
“Marguerite Lemon: Anglaise”—His melancholia—
Miss Marie Ruthven becomes Lady Vandyck—Miss
Lemon’s threat—A series of tragedies—The Philosopher’s
Stone—Gout and consumption—The proposed Whitehall
panels—An intense disappointment—The King reduces
Vandyck’s prices—Paintings or tapestry?

DURING the last years of Vandyck’s life, if we are to believe the stories told by various more or less authentic historians, the famous artist, worn out with work and his purse depleted by his extravagances, fell a victim to the charlatans who professed ability to discover the Philosopher’s Stone, and according to Madou’s *Scenes from the Lives of the Painters*, he was found by one of his compatriots who came to pay him a visit, not in a studio, but in a sort of laboratory, where, worn and enfeebled, he sought the golden chimera which was to make him independent. It is even stated that the fumes of the charcoal and gases of his laboratory were partly responsible

for the enfeebled state of his health and his early death. Upon one point, however, all his chroniclers seem to agree, that Vandyck lived a life too strenuous as regards his work, and too dissipated as regards his relaxations. Indeed, to entertain his sitters and his friends, to exercise his tact and diplomacy amid all the petty jealousies of a court, as well as to produce daily more work than most artists are content to do in a week, required a constitution such as not one man in a thousand possesses, and this exceptional physical condition was not one ever possessed by the highly-strung little Flemish painter.

That he led a life of dissipation seems open to dispute, for though it is generally acknowledged that the favourite painter of Charles I. was susceptible to feminine charms, as possessors of the artistic temperament generally are, his natural refinement, as well as the enormous and continuous demands made upon his time, seems to refute the idea that he had either the inclination or opportunity for vulgar excesses. There are several anecdotes which appear to show that with all his gallantry Vandyck did not allow his feelings to interfere with the business of his life—a business which towards the end of his career seems to have been the

somewhat commercial one of getting full value for his work. One of these stories runs to the effect that while painting a portrait of Lady Stanhope, for whom he was supposed to have more than a mere artistic admiration, the artist disputed with her about the price of the picture, threatening that if she would not give the sum he mentioned he could sell it to somebody who would do so, meaning, apparently, a gentleman named Carey Raleigh, with whom Lady Stanhope was supposed to be in love, and into whose possession, curiously enough, the picture eventually came, for in Charles I.'s letter of private directions to his comptroller at Whitehall, after his secret withdrawal from the Palace, he says, "There are three pictures which are not mine and that I desire you to restore ; my wife's picture in blue satin, sitting in a chair, you must send to Mrs. Kirk ; my eldest daughter's picture, copied by Belcam [probably Jan van Belkamp, a Dutch artist who died in 1653], to the Countess of Anglesea, and my Lady Stanhope's picture to Carey Raleigh."

The story quoted earlier, and which has Houbraken for its authority, as to Vandyck's reply to the Queen of England in response to her question as to why he devoted so much attention to the painting of her hands, seems also

wanting in the chivalry which one expects from Vandyck, and it can hardly have been said seriously by so courtly a gentleman as Vandyck. Certainly Rubens would never have committed such a solecism.

Vandyck was still a young man, though within but a few years of his death, when the woman whose name has always been associated with that of the famous painter, and whose features he has handed down to posterity on several canvases, came into his life. Of the physical beauty and charm of this lady, Margaret Lemon, whom Vandyck established openly in his house as his mistress, there seems no second opinion, and the fact that the painter took this somewhat unusual course for a man in his official position proves, if proof were needed, how deep was his passion and how unreasoning his infatuation. This open defiance of the social conventions was the more remarkable that he seems in most respects to have been careful not to give occasion for scandalous reports, and to have exercised a good deal of circumspection in the conduct of his love affairs. There is a portrait at Hampton Court of an Alderman Lemon, probably the father of the lady afterwards to become notorious, and from her father's position as a



MARGARET LEMON

merchant prince it is open to suppose that his daughter had received a fair education and had been well brought up. Certainly with his refined tastes the painter would not have been attracted to any woman, however great her beauty, whose speech or manners were coarse or vulgar, and there seems no doubt that she was in no way an ordinary courtesan but rather a woman passionate and pleasure-loving and at the same time emotional to the point of neuroticism. Her portrait by Vandyck, also in the Hampton Court Collection, gives a very fair idea of her charms, and is among the painter's most sympathetic female portraits. Regular features, large dark eyes, a beautifully formed mouth and chin, and a graceful rounded figure, are the merest inventory of her charms, and the picture itself must be seen to realise the attractions which ensnared the painter, who must have been particularly well qualified to stand in judgment as regards female beauty.

Another portrait of Miss Lemon by Vandyck was engraved by Hollar in 1646, and the engraving bears the inscription, "Marguerite Lemon, Anglaise." Lord Spencer has yet another portrait of Miss Lemon in his magnificent collection at Althorp.

Slowly, but surely, the strain of the life he

was leading began to tell upon Vandyck, and early in 1640 his health showed signs of giving way. His chest became affected and his melancholia increased. His royal patron and his many friends tried to persuade him to break off his liaison with Miss Lemon, whose jealous and passionate temperament made ceaseless demands upon the painter's time, while her extravagance could only be an added load in the race for wealth which was gradually sapping his strength. The King, who had a genuine affection for his Court Painter, then conceived the idea of marrying him to a lady of the Court, thinking thus to bring him into a more regular and less dissipated life. The lady whom King Charles proposed to marry to his favourite painter was young and beautiful, of distinguished family, but without fortune—Miss Marie Ruthven by name—a grand-daughter of Lord Ruthven, the first Earl of Gowrie. Her father, the fifth son of Lord Ruthven, had been imprisoned in the Tower during the greater part of James I.'s reign for his supposed connection with the Gowrie conspiracy. Miss Ruthven, however, who was a Roman Catholic, had been attached to the Queen's household, her religion, doubtless, having been a passport to the favour of

Henrietta Maria. Her aunts were the Duchess of Montrose, the Duchess of Lennox, and the Countess of Atholl, so that in spite of her father's disgrace and her consequent lack of fortune, she certainly brought Vandyck influential connections. From a social point of view it was a great marriage for Sir Anthony, but we are not told how the girl herself viewed what would on all sides among her relatives be condemned as a *mésalliance*. In any case it was a hard task to set a young wife—that of drawing a husband who did not care for her from the entanglements of a beloved mistress, and to distract a dying man from the dangers of a dissipated existence! The marriage could hardly be a happy one under such circumstances, and it certainly had no ameliorating effect upon Vandyck's health, for he died within about a year from the time of the marriage, of which, owing to the destruction of the registers in the Great Fire of 1666, no official record remains.

Vandyck's separation from his mistress, who appears to have been genuinely attached to the man thus torn from her arms by the well-meant intrigues of the Court, was naturally attended by many stormy scenes, which must have been a sufficiently painful and ill-omened

beginning for the painter's married life. For several months, indeed, Vandyck seems to have gone in fear of his life from his discarded mistress, who had sworn vengeance upon him and threatened to cut off or injure his right hand so that he would be deprived of the means of livelihood. Before her threats of vengeance could be carried out, however, death had rendered revenge unnecessary, and Miss Lemon consoled herself with a member of the Royal Bodyguard, who was killed in the Civil War, and the unhappy woman, overwhelmed by this double calamity, shot herself in a fit of despair, and thus died a few months after the man who had forsaken her.

Worn out with ill-health, Vandyck seems still to have been the prey of charlatans, who professed to be able (with financial assistance, of course!) to discover the secret of transmuting all metals into gold, and Sir Kenelm Digby seems to have encouraged his friend in this will-o'-the-wisp chase after riches. It is to be regretted that the painter did not act like the other great Flemish master who, when approached by a so-called alchemist, Brendel, who wished to induce Rubens to join him in a similar mad scheme to discover the Philosopher's Stone, opened the door of his studio and

pointing to his canvases said, "You come too late, my good man. I discovered the Philosopher's Stone long ago. My palette and brushes are worth more than your secret." The profits made by his painting were gradually diminished as Vandyck gave up more and more time to his chemical researches, which, moreover, gradually sapped his energy. The unhealthiness of sitting in the fumes of a laboratory, added to a certain delicacy of constitution, seem to have added the last straw. He developed gout and consumption—the malady to which he eventually succumbed—and his fortunes seemed to be at the ebb like those of his illustrious patron, whose coffers were empty and whose position became daily more difficult and more involved.

It was at this unfortunate moment that Vandyck suggested that he should adorn the walls of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall with frescoes illustrating the history of the Order of the Garter, the ceiling having already some years previously been painted by Rubens. The idea pleased the King, and the Court Painter designed the scheme of decoration for one of the panels, subjecting it to His Majesty for his approval, and fixing the price of the finished work at £4,000, or a thousand pounds more

than Rubens had received for adorning the ceiling. The King's financial position, however, at this juncture did not allow of such an outlay upon what, after all, was an artistic luxury and not a practical necessity such as pressed him on all sides, and he finally renounced the project, a decision which caused Vandyck acute annoyance, though he could hardly fail to realise the financial embarrassments of his royal master at this period owing to the stubborn refusal of the Houses of Parliament to vote any money until the King yielded to their various demands. The subjects of the four panels submitted for approval were as follows:—

- (1) The Coronation of the King.
- (2) The Inauguration of the Order of the Garter by Edward III.
- (3) The Procession of the King and the Knights of the Order, as celebrated on St. George's Day.
- (4) The Royal Banquet after the Procession.

The rough drawing or cartoon for one of the panels was executed, that of the Procession of the Knights of the Order, and a mention of this appears in one of Vandyck's accounts with the Royal Treasury. This drawing, after the death of Charles I., passed into the hands

of Sir Peter Lely, whose admiration for the great portrait-painter took the practical form of acquiring every possible specimen of his work which came into the market ; later on the cartoon became the property of Lord Northington, when it was engraved by Richard Cooper in 1782. Sir Joshua Reynolds became its owner at the Northington sale, paying sixty-seven guineas for it, and it is now in the possession of the Duke of Rutland. In this sketch the Sovereign under the canopy bears the features of Charles I., while the Queen and the various ladies of the Court take part in the pageant from a gallery overlooking the scene. That the King was much pleased with the design there is no doubt, and the disappointment to Vandyck when the decision to abandon or indefinitely postpone the scheme for the adornment of Whitehall was intense.

According to various unauthentic statements King Charles is supposed to have come to the decision because Vandyck asked the exorbitant price of £80,000 for the completed scheme of decoration—a sum which, according to the scale of remuneration the artist received for his work, would have been an unheard-of and ridiculous price, and Vandyck was most unlikely to have put himself in the position of

being laughed at, which he assuredly would have been had he given such an estimate for his own work. On the other hand, though there was reason enough for the King's not wishing to spend even £4,000 on the mural decoration of his palace at such a time, he may very well have assented conditionally to Vandyck's proposal while postponing the execution for a time, and thus put it out of Vandyck's power ever to do it, since almost immediately afterwards the King was forced to fly from his capital.

Michiels points out that this last seems a very probable explanation of the affair, as in the account for pictures painted by Vandyck and sent in to the King is an item—the last on the list—entitled “*Le dessein de Roy et tous les Chevaliers*,” to which no price is affixed, the painter evidently having considered that no price should be made for it as it was merely a sketch for a picture to be painted and paid for subsequently, though of course the space left empty may have been so left on purpose for the King to fill in with the price he considered just in the circumstance of his having changed his plans. His Majesty went very carefully through these accounts, and frequently made reductions in the prices charged. In the very



PRINCE RUPERT

list above referred to of twenty-five items the King made reductions in the price of no less than thirteen of the pictures, altering in two cases the sum of £200 to £100. One of these last was the famous portrait of himself scheduled therein as "Le Roi alla Ciasse," now in the Louvre.

With regard to the same subject Bellori says that Vandyck did not intend to paint on the walls themselves, but to prepare cartoons to be reproduced by the tapestry manufactory which had been established at Mortlake, a theory which would account for the enormous estimate presented by the artist for the carrying out of the work, namely £80,000. It has been said that the figures should read £8,000, as Rubens had only received £3,000 for the ceiling, and if the work was to be executed as a fresco this would be quite a probable price, though ridiculously insufficient for the carrying out of such vast and complicated designs in tapestry woven in rich materials.

CHAPTER XVI

HIS LAST DAYS

A visit to Flanders—Paris—The Louvre: another disappointment—The return to London—Increasing illness—A commission declined—"I find myself growing worse"—A series of misfortunes—His last illness—The King's solicitude—Burial at St. Paul's—His will—The last honour.

IT was in September, 1641, after the idea of the decoration of Whitehall was finally abandoned, that Vandyck made up his mind to pay a visit to his native country, and on September 13th he obtained a safe conduct to Flanders for himself and his young wife. Whether this visit was the result of his disappointment in the matter of the cartoons for the Banqueting Hall, or whether it was made for business purposes, it is impossible to say. Probably a mixture of motives induced his sudden determination, among them, no doubt, the wish to introduce his wife to his relatives and friends at Antwerp, and incidentally to escape from the importunities of Miss Lemon,

who was still vowing vengeance upon him for his desertion.

Of this, as it turned out, the last visit to Antwerp, we have but little record, but we know that he settled his affairs with the publisher of his engravings, Martin van den Enden, and saw his natural daughter, whom he provided for in his will and left to the care of his sister, Susanna Vandyck, who was a nun at Antwerp. He visited also the rest of his family, and the family of his old master Rubens, who had recently died, and then made a tour through Flanders to show Lady Vandyck his native country. During this tour he painted the interesting picture of Constantine Huyghens and his children, surrounded by decorations in monochrome in imitation of bas-relief. After the stay of a few months in Belgium, he and Lady Vandyck set off for Paris, where he arrived in January, 1641. This sudden visit to Paris seems to have been made with the hope of obtaining the commission for the decoration of the Louvre which was just then under discussion, Rubens having previously been entrusted with a similar work at the Luxembourg. When Vandyck arrived in Paris, however, he found that the important work was to be entrusted to a French artist, Nicolas Poussin,

who had been summoned by the French King from Rome for that purpose, and curiously enough Vandyck's application seems to have been entirely ignored, in spite of the fact that he was the favourite painter of Queen Henrietta Maria, the sister of King Louis.

This second disappointment to a man in his broken state of health must have been a great trial, for throughout his life Vandyck had never ceased to seek an opportunity of undertaking one of the great works of decoration which had brought Rubens' reputation to its zenith, and now, at the end of his life, and wasted with disease, the desire was still strong enough to induce him to undertake a long and fatiguing journey in the hope of accomplishing his cherished ambition. The intrigues of rival painters seem to have been mainly instrumental in this frustration of his hopes, and he returned disgusted to London, where he was to die without having realised his ambition of measuring himself, in this respect, against his famous master. Perhaps, on the whole, it is not to be regretted that Vandyck was not submitted to such a severe test—perhaps he might not have achieved with credit so vast an undertaking, for with all his talent he did not possess the inexhaustible fancy and fertility of composition

necessary for a great scheme of decoration such as he desired. Yet his drawing for the Procession of the Knights of the Garter, to which allusion has already been made, shows that he was by no means incompetent in this direction.

In November, 1641, Vandyck was still in Paris, or, more probably, had returned there after taking his wife back to England, but by this time he seems to have had no further hopes that the adornment of the Louvre would be entrusted to him, and feeling his malady increase, he seems to have been obliged to refuse some minor commission offered him through the medium of M. de Chavigny, to whom the dying artist wrote the following letter—a document first published in the *Revue des Documents Historiques*, edited by M. Etienne Charavay.

“Sir,—I see by your very welcome letter, as I also hear from the mouth of Monsieur Montagu, the favour and honour extended to me by His Eminence the Cardinal. I infinitely regret the misfortune of my ill-health, since it renders me incapable, and unworthy of so much favour. I shall never have an honour more desired than that of serving His Eminence, and if I can recover my health, as I trust, I shall make a special journey in order to receive his commands.

“Meanwhile, I am extremely indebted and obliged, and as I find myself growing worse from day to day, I desire to proceed with all diligence to my home in England, to which end accordingly I entreat you to forward me a passport for myself and five servants, my coach and four horses, and oblige me ever to remain as I am, Sir,

“Your very humble and obliged servant,

“ANTO VANDYCK.

“16th November, 1641.”

Shortly after Vandyck's return to England, the painter lost a powerful friend and protector in Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who perished on the scaffold in May, 1641. Ill-fortune seemed from this moment to dog the footsteps of the unfortunate Court Painter, whose worldly prosperity was, of course, bound up with that of his royal master. The Royal Family had dispersed in March—the Queen and her daughters to France, the King to York, a royalist stronghold, and the rest elsewhere, for London was at this juncture a hotbed of rebellion. The position of uncertainty which prevailed all over the country previous to the outbreak of the Civil War, now inevitable, had the natural result of reducing the demand for portraits, and the anxiety

for his future, added to the enfeebled health, made poor Sir Anthony's position at this moment anything but satisfactory. His young wife saw her husband dying by inches before her eyes, and barely ten days after the birth of her child, a daughter, whom she named Justina, Vandyck died. The dying man had previously made a will providing for the maintenance of his natural daughter, of his sisters, and of "my wife Lady Maria Van Dyke and my Daughter new borne." Vandyck also bequeathed a sum of three pounds sterling for the poor of St. Paul's Church, where he wished to be buried, and a similar sum to the poor of the parish of Blackfriars, and a small sum to each of his servants. Lady Vandyck, Mrs. Catherine Cowley, and Mr. Aurelius de Meghem, were appointed executors of the will, which was proved on the 13th December, 1641.

At the end of November the King had returned from the North of England, and was much upset to hear of the dangerous condition of his famous painter. He sent his own physician to the invalid, promising him a reward of £300 if he succeeded in preserving the patient's life. All efforts were, however, in vain, and the illustrious painter died, like Raphael, in the prime of life, being only forty-

two years of age. A memorandum from the pocket-book of "Nicassius Roussel, Jeweller to King James and King Charles I., who lived in Blackfriars, and was at the burying of Vandyck," is given in Mr. W. H. Carpenter's *Pictorial Notices*, and runs as follows :—"The 9th December 1641 Sir Ant. Vandyck died at his house in the Blackfriars and was on the 11th of the said month Buried in St. Paul's Church near the tomb of John of Gaunt which may be better understood by considering Ashmoles Plan of the Quire of St. Paul's London." The painter's tomb in the old Cathedral of St. Paul's was destroyed in the Great Fire.

The painter's little daughter was baptized on the very day that her unfortunate father died, a fact which we learn from an entry in the register of St. Anne's, Blackfriars:—"1641, Dec. 9th, Justiniana, daughter of Sir Anthony Vandyck and his lady, baptized." Vandyck's daughter afterwards married Sir John Stepney of Prendergast, Pembrokeshire, who was in the Horse Guards when the regiment was first raised in the reign of Charles II. Two years after the Restoration an annuity of £200 was granted to Justiniana Vandyck, or, rather, Lady Stepney, for life, commencing at Michaelmas, 1661. This pension seems to have been,

from the entries in the Book of the Exchequer, very irregularly paid, and a second petition was presented previously to 1670 wherein she states that the pension is "her sole subsistence," a curious fact, considering that she had married a man of position. From this date the payments were made regularly. The Sir Thomas Stepney who died 12th September, 1825, when the title became extinct, seems to have been a member of the same family, but not a descendant of Justiniana's. Lady Vandyck, the widow, subsequently married Sir Richard Pryse, a Montgomeryshire squire, but had no children.

Mr. William Hookham Carpenter gives in the appendix to his interesting memoir on Vandyck a copy of the will, which is witnessed by Abraham Derkindee and Derrick van Hoost, whose names clearly denote their Flemish nationality. Stripped of its legal verbiage, the will leaves four thousand pounds to his illegitimate daughter, named Maria Theresa, appointing his sister, Susanna Vandyck, a nun in a convent at Antwerp, her trustee, providing in the case of his sister's death that the daughter's property should be administered for her profit by the four "Madams of the Nunnery" where his sister resided. To another sister, Isabella,

he bequeaths an annuity of two hundred and fifty guilders yearly. The will provides further that "after the decease of my sister Susanna and of my daughter Maria Theresa Van Dyke the aforesaid moneys and estate afore mencioned shall fall and come to my lawfull Daughter borne here in London on the first day of December Anno Dⁿⁱ One thousand sixe hundred fortie and one."

To his wife and his daughter Justiniana he leaves all his pictures, goods, effects, including moneys due to him from King Charles and others, to be equally divided between them. If his daughter Justiniana should die before her mother, half of her portion is to go to Lady Vandyck and half to his daughter at Antwerp, and if the painter's sister and his illegitimate daughter both die before his daughter Justiniana, the latter was to become legatee of all the painter's property in Belgium. This last contingency was the one which seems eventually to have happened, as in Justiniana's second petition to the King (in the Public Record Office) for the renewal of her pension she mentions "having occasion to goe for Antwerp in Brabant to looke after a small fortune left her by her Ant there which she may bee in danger of looseing unless she speedily repair thither,"

and making the expenses of the journey an excuse for approaching His Majesty a second time. During her visit to the Low Countries Lady Stepney seems to have married again a man of her father's nationality, Martin de Carbonnel, and had three children, a son called Thomas and two daughters, who both took the veil; the descendants of the son are still in existence.

A monument was erected to the famous painter by Charles I. in the choir of the old St. Paul's Cathedral, near the tomb of John of Gaunt. The design of this, the last honour paid to Vandyck, was a figure representing the Genius of Painting with the left arm resting on a death's head, and underneath was the following inscription:—

QUI
DUM VIVERET
MULTIS IMMORTALITATEM
DONAVERAT
VITA FUNCTUS EST
CAROLUS I.
MAG. BRIT. FR. ET HIB.
REX
ANTONIO VAN DYCK
EQUITI AURATO
P. C.

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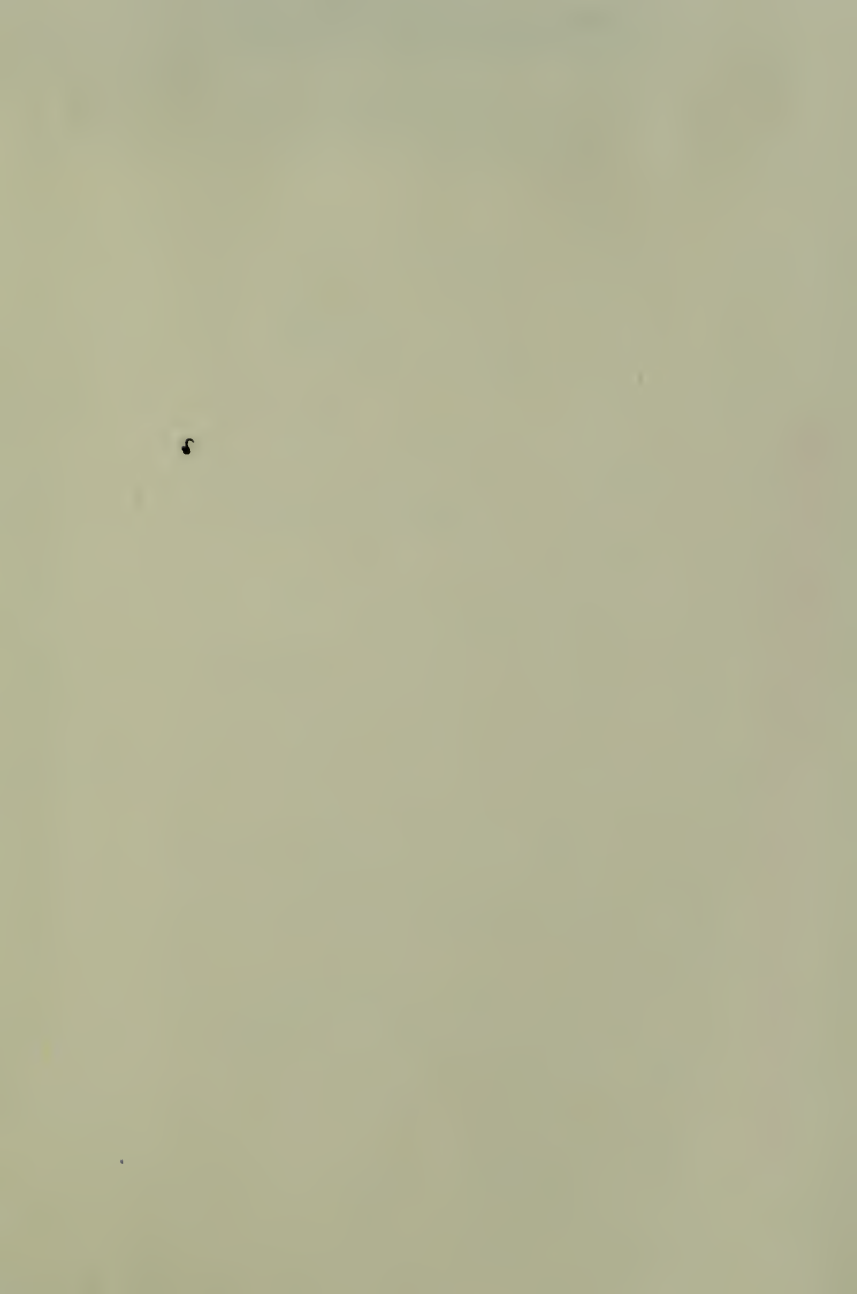
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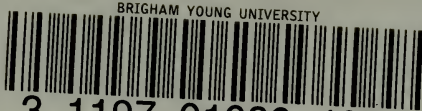
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